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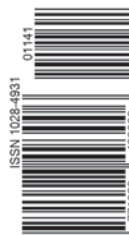
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4x4 Mega World LC 79 Pick-up – With trick BP-51 suspension
VW Amarok BiTDI 4Motion – Can it reach 1400km on one tank?
Subaru Outback 2.5 – Tackling Sani Pass in a station wagon?
Volvo V60 Cross Country goes mountain biking



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Issue No 141
January 2016

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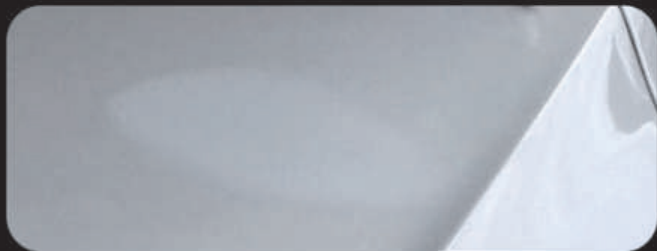
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Tips on antifreeze

I have just caught up with the August 2015 issue of your excellent magazine and refer to the story, "Beware the big freeze", by Francois Rossouw.

I think it must be reasonably well known that diesel can solidify in freezing temperatures, which inhibits its ability to flow, thus resulting in vehicles becoming immobilised. The purpose of this letter, however, is to offer a comment about the use of antifreeze in freezing conditions.

My understanding is that antifreeze – more commonly referred to as coolant by manufacturers – is an all-year round requirement and should not only be added as winter approaches.

This product has several important functions, including (but not necessarily confined to) lubricating the water pump and preventing corrosion within the engine.

Many manufacturers stipulate that their own product, especially formulated for their particular engines, be used all year round so as to provide maximum protection with minimum problems.

The days of pouring in some "one size fits all" antifreeze when winter approaches have long gone – and good riddance, I say!

John Gardener, Howick

Card machine scam

In the TJ's Forecourt column in your November edition, TJ ends up by saying

that he cannot understand why these portable card machines are stolen. Unfortunately, there appears to be a new scam on the go. Criminals use these stolen card machines to steal from and defraud innocent customers.

The card machine is used to give the appearance of being the real thing, but the machine is actually converted into a skimming device.

The criminals will employ a waitress or a petrol attendant to use this converted machine (which looks very real) to con customers and obtain their card and pin number to clone the card and steal as much money from the conned customer as they can.

The attendant will insert the card and then turn away for a brief moment to get a better signal to obtain the card information. Sometimes they'll even produce a non-responsive slip that was pre-printed.

The *skelm* will then swap the skimming card machine for a real card machine under the pretence that the first machine could not complete the transaction for some reason.

It is so sad, but we need to be super alert.

Jannie van Vuuren, Welgemoed

Road safety solutions

I have been subscribing to your magazine for some time now and find it to be great reading. Thank you.

I do not understand why SA cannot have

better and safer roads. If we take a look at other countries, which have far greater numbers of vehicles than we do, we notice that they have less accidents and deaths.

If we adhered to the following, I think we would all benefit:

1. All drivers/motorcycle riders to have a legal, valid licences.
2. All vehicles to be licensed.
3. All vehicles to have a valid certificate of roadworthiness, disc to be displayed on vehicle.
4. All vehicles to have minimum third party insurance.

The consequences of not having any of the above:

1. Driving without a valid licence: immediate fine of R5000. Drivers lose points and are banned from driving for a minimum of six months.
2. An unlicensed vehicle found on the roads is immediately squashed.
3. Vehicles with no valid certificate of roadworthiness are towed away to the pound. Only when the towing fees, pound fees and a hefty fine are paid, can the owner get his vehicle back.
4. No insurance: car is squashed

I have heard that something like 65% of vehicles on our roads are uninsured. What happened to the purchasing of your third party insurance disc when you renewed your vehicle licence? If every motorist had at least third party insurance, surely your general insurance premiums would decrease?

It's a win-win for all involved.

Let's put these ideas out there and see what response we get.

Lance van Schalkwyk, via e-mail

Land Rover problems

In the middle of 2015 I took my Range Rover Sport for a normal service at our local dealer, Alliance Motors. When I went to collect it, I was told that their diagnostic assessment had indicated that it had a defective transmission system and that I should replace the gearbox at a cost of US\$22 000.

I got hold of an official Land Rover Technical Bulletin LTB 00514v2 of 16 January 2015, which clearly indicated that this problem is mainly associated with vehicles in the range: Discovery 3 LR3 (LA)

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model 2008-2009, Discovery 4/LR 4 (LA) model 2010-2011, Range Rover (LM) model 2008-2011 and Range Rover Sport (LS) model 2008-2009.

I brought this information to the dealer's attention with the demand that they replace the gearbox at their cost as this was a factory defect which had to be attended to by the manufacturer.

The dealer referred me to their South African head office, which in turn requested a second diagnostic assessment. This was eventually done, with the same results and advice. Unfortunately, they all said it had to be at my cost.

I made contact with the UK Land Rover office, which seems reluctant to respond. What course of action can I, and other owners of these vehicles experiencing similar problems, now undertake?

Moses Banda, Chilanga, Zambia

Nicola Clarke, public relations manager of Land Rover SA and Sub-Sahara Africa, comments:

The technical bulletin mentioned is to provide diagnostic guidance for our technicians, not to identify a specific fault with the vehicles. This information has been provided to reduce diagnostic time spent on a vehicle displaying specific symptoms and diagnostic trouble codes, based on information gathered by our engineering teams in conjunction with the transmission supplier.

As with any vehicle outside the original warranty period, each case is assessed looking at a number of different criteria to decide whether a contribution can be offered by Jaguar Land Rover towards the cost of the repair as a goodwill gesture. Without having the vehicle details it is difficult to comment on the specifics of this case.

Engines too small

My December issue of *Leisure Wheels* has just arrived, and having glanced at the cover, I turned straight to the article titled "Luxury giants clash".

Noting who the protagonists were, I'd already decided which one I thought would win before I got to page 20, not to mention page 25, and I was right. However, without giving it too much thought, I would personally choose the Volvo over the Audi, but for one small problem – the Volvo's engine!

I'm very wary of big SUVs and pick-ups burdened with small engines. I'm on my third Discovery since 2008 – a 2014 Disco 4 SDV6 SE. It puts out 183kW and 600Nm and I – and many others, it seems – will need more convincing from the likes of Volvo that a 2,0-litre mill under the bonnet is a suitable match for a loaded SUV towing a boat on our national roads, and over our mountain passes at Christmas time!

Like Volvo, VW will have us believe that the 2,0-litre motor doing duty in the Amarok is a wonderful engine. If it is, why don't they use it in the Touareg, Macan, Cayenne or the Q7, for that matter?

I'm pretty sure that if the Amarok packed the same firepower as its siblings, it would be selling more than the 154 units they sold in July – compared to the top-selling Hilux (1001) and Ranger (1685) for the same period.

You could argue that both Toyota and Ford offer 2,5-litre and 2,2-litre diesel options respectively in their pick-ups and that both these options contribute to their respective sales figures, and you'd be right-ish. However, when it comes to SUVs, Toyota only offers two 2,5-litre diesel options in the Fortuner and Ford

doesn't offer the Everest with anything but a 3.2-litre diesel.

See where I'm going with this?

Why do Volvo insist on limiting their diesel range for the XC90 to an engine we clearly don't like? Do they not see what VW have done to themselves with the Amarok?

We, like the Yanks, live by the maxim that there's no replacement for displacement. Volvo sold 15 XC90's in July! Their natural rivals, all packing 3,0-litre diesel options, sold an average of 73 vehicles in the same period. There's a story in there somewhere, and I believe one only needs to open the bonnet of the XC90 to find it.

That said, there is no denying the XC90 is an amazing car. I just don't understand why Volvo are being so conservative with their engine choice when the likes of Land Rover don't hesitate to offer significantly more expensive, supercharged 5,0-litre V8s and 4,4-litre TDV8s in their Range Rover Sports, and sold nearly five times the number of cars in the same period.

Peter du Preez, Cape Town

Survival kit questions

I refer to the article by Glyn Demmer in your November edition. I basically agree with the contents of Glyn's survival kit, but I do have some comments and questions.

I may not be a very good shopper and perhaps do not really see the merchandise on shelves that I should, so forgive me if I ask him some really stupid questions:

1. Firstly, and most importantly, where can I acquire a Vigil tyre pressure gauge? I have been a fan of these gauges for many years. Many of mine had the "Michelin" brand name on the face. I have not been able to source these gauges anywhere for probably the last 10 years, and I do not think they are produced any more. When



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I searched the internet I could not even find an image of such a gauge. Please advise me on who supplies these tyre pressure gauges.

2. Where did Glyn unearth a tin? Long gone are the days of tins that contained Sharpe's toffees, or maybe cigarettes. Plastic containers are available, but where can I find a tin?

3. I agree that the kit should contain a pen, but what is a Fisher pen and who stocks them?

4. A notebook is important, but what is a Moleskin notebook? I have never seen such a notebook in a stationery store. Who stocks them?

Thanks for a great magazine.

Noel van der Merwe, via e-mail

Glyn Demmer responds: *There are a few examples of the vintage Vigil gauges available on bidorbuy.co.za.*

It's true that tins are not widely used any more. Your best bet is to find one online, or in an antique store.

The Fisher pen is unique in that it was designed to work in zero gravity. This means you can use it while lying down. It's more commonly known as the "space pen". It can also be ordered online from leading retailers, such as Amazon.

The moleskin pad is a notebook covered in a durable cotton fabric called moleskin.

A new safety body, please

I have read Ashref Ismail's articles in *Leisure Wheels* and am delighted that you are trying to improve the unacceptable road safety situation in SA.

I am very aware of many contributory factors to our road traffic set-up, which is so lacking in a lot of different ways – from untrained or misguided policing to bad driving habits and unlicensed or fraudulently licensed vehicles and drivers.

My view is that we need an organisation like the AA, but with teeth, to work with the authorities to identify and act in areas where improvements are essential if we are to reduce our traffic fatality rate.

Examples are: Driver education, training of metro police so they can control moving violation infringements; effective visible policing; teaching the police and motorists the difference between four-way stops and traffic circles, and lane discipline as practised in Europe.

Our road engineers should also look at smooth entry and exit onto and off our highways instead of the traffic backlogs

caused by the inappropriate location of traffic lights, for instance.

There is so much improvement waiting to happen, which our incompetent officials just can't seem to see.

I witness police roadblocks and traffic fine opportunities every day, and often in very dangerous places, such as on hidden curves, which any half-wit can understand is extremely dangerous.

I get the impression that your articles are designed to educate the motorist, which is commendable, but I beg the authorities to consider the formation of an effective organisation as mentioned above.

Neil Whitehead, via e-mail

Ashref Ismail responds: *Thank you for your observations and suggestions. I wholeheartedly agree with you on the formation of such a watchdog body. Plans are afoot for a meeting of the various road safety NGOs with a view to consolidating them into one such powerful lobby group that will have the authority to keep government interventions in check. The challenge is unification into one organisation, given the different, sometimes vested interests. We will keep you posted on progress made.*

WINNING LETTER



Wildlife tales

What I like most about *Leisure Wheels* is the input from your readers from all walks of life. It seems that they know more about fish than about birds.

Jannie van Vuuren wrote in about the "snoek" which turned out to be a geelbek (September issue). But so far nobody has commented on another slip-up in the same article (A nest of village tales, August issue), which carried a photograph of "peli-

cans" which were actually greater flamingoes. I just had to chirp...

Johan Marais' snake articles are so informative, and handy, too, for us bushwhackers to learn and know about them – for our own safety, and that of the snakes.

I am a tour guide in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Imfolosi Hluhluwe Park reserves, and we see a snake on about one in ten trips, but birds... At least 50 species a day!

They are quite useful to tour guides. A vulture, for instance, may warn of something exciting around the corner – a lion kill or wild dogs on the hunt.

Some of your reader-writers comment on the bird life they encounter on their adventures, but most of them don't. I suspect this is because of their lack of knowledge on the subject. I'm sure you wouldn't struggle to find somebody to explain the finer points of birding to us every month. Basically, successful bird watching is all about beaks, binoculars and bird books. Throw in a bakkie and a beer in the bush, and we're right in *Leisure Wheels* territory!

Paul, via e-mail

Sounds like a great idea to us, Paul. We'll pursue it. (Just make sure that beer is enjoyed after all the driving is done!) – Ed.

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Desalination in Namibia

The report, "Is this how to get the desert blooming?" in your November issue brought back memories. I attended boarding school in Lüderitz from 1948 to 1957, and in all those years – and before – the town had to rely entirely on its desalination plant.

In earlier times the task was performed by the then SA Railways steam-powered condenser, but in the mid-fifties a more efficient and bigger desalination plant was imported from Germany and installed in part of the huge, under-utilised power station.

Then, towards the end of the sixties, the government sank a borehole at Koichab in the Namib Desert, about 80km inland from the town, and struck good and sufficient water! A pump station was built with a pipeline feeding the town's reservoirs, to the great joy of all Lüderitz inhabitants.

On your way to Cape Cross, just north of Wlotzka's Baken – a small vacation settlement – you must have noticed the structures of a gigantic desalination plant.

As the boreholes at the Rooibank pump station in the Kuiseb delta to the south-east of Walvis Bay could no longer cope with the demand for fresh water from this town, Langstrand, Swakopmund and the huge, water-consuming Rössing open-cast uranium mine, it was decided to build this new capable desalination plant specifically for the use of Rössing Uranium.

When last we visited that area in 2008, it was still under construction and I am not sure when exactly it was commissioned.

As a matter of interest, also in the sixties, Windhoek became a world leader in constructing an enormous waste-water purification plant for human consumption.

Lastly, it has to be noted that your son's observation about turning a desolate

desert into crop yielding fields by using purified water from the nearby ocean was a splendid one. This way of thinking should be implemented by world leaders as a matter of urgency, as the population growth is seemingly unstoppable!

Wolfi Dyck, via e-mail

Damaraland adventures

I so enjoyed reading the article in *Leisure Wheels* (December, 2015) about the trip to Damaraland in a Ford Everest.

As a student, I travelled in this area in a Land Rover pick-up in June, 1975. Luckily, the owner of the Land Rover, Eckhart Haber, was from South West Africa and managed to acquire the necessary permits to visit the area.

We were searching for a rumoured rock face to climb. Although our search was in vain, we did manage some enjoyable rock climbing on



the Pontoks in the Spitzkoppe region.

Some of our routes were written up in *Spitzkoppe & Pontoks – A Climber's Guide* by Eckhart Haber (Blue Mountain Publishers, 2001).

Martin Briggs, Onrusrivier

It's all about Terrain Response

I read the article on the new Ford Everest with interest, especially regarding the fears expressed by the writers and others about the 20-inch wheels and tyres.

I now drive a Discovery 4 and I have read many stories about the dangers of the 20-inch wheels and tyres with which it is shod. However, I have come to believe that all these fears are unfounded, just as the drivers of the Everest found to be the case in the most rock-strewn terrain on earth. The reasons are as follows:

Last year my sons treated me to the Land Rover "Experience" at Solihull as a birthday present. There I chose a Range Rover as the vehicle for our excursions. The car was shod with ordinary AT tyres on its 20-inch wheels.

We drove through sand, extraordinarily thick, buttery mud, gravel and a specially built rock encrusted hill with raised sharp edges/ledges, and equally sharp points that were daunting to look at.

I asked the instructor to guide me through this rocky section, as I have done in the past back on SA's rough rocky sections.

He calmly instructed me to take it slowly up and down the jumbled rocks, adding that the car would do the rest. I was tempted to get out and inspect the road ahead, but he instructed me to move on. I negotiated the rocky terrain with such ease that I could not believe that it had happened, so I asked him if we could do it again, to which he agreed. Same result, same tyres, no blow-outs.

→ pg 10

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I could not believe that we had traversed all this terrain on the AT tyres, without deflating or re-inflating them for the various different surfaces. Not once was there wheel spin – not even the slightest, whether in the thick loose sand, deep mud from a standstill start or the stop/start ascent and descent of the rocky sections. There was no need for lugged tyres or deflating the tyres in the sandy areas, or worrying about slicing or piercing rocks.

When I got back to SA I rushed out to buy the Discovery 4 that I now drive, in the process selling my beloved Discovery Tdi of 16 years.

Soon, I went on a local “Experience” in my own Terrain Response vehicle and, against advice, did not deflate the tyres for the event. Up and down the rock-strewn terrain we went, through thick sand and sludgy mud. Not once did the vehicle falter or the wheels spin, all thanks to the vehicle’s Terrain Response reading the conditions so accurately. We had no punctures nor any rim damage – not even cuts on the tyres.

What I have come to believe is that Land Rover’s Terrain Response has taken all the traction out of the tyres and into the system, thereby eliminating the need for one

to deflate tyres, fit massively lugged tyres and so on. It is my view that the Everest’s “tyre” success in the rockiest terrain on earth and the sand sections thereafter was due to the foregoing, Ford having cribbed the Terrain Response system from Land Rover when they owned it!

By the way, I find it interesting that one does not hear any more Landy jokes around the campfire – just a hidden admiration that smacks of envy. I must say that envy is a terrible thing.

Thanks for a great mag!

Denis Stigant, Greenacres



Drama in a hailstorm

The summer storms tend to bring out the best and worst in people, as TJ recently found out

The time of year has arrived when we have an occasional hailstorm – thankfully, I am happy to admit, considering the drought crippling the country.

I was chatting to a new employee on a recent Tuesday afternoon, and told him that an amazing thing happens when we have a hailstorm. With a storm fast approaching at the time, he was able to experience at first hand what I meant, although a rather nasty incident marred the day.

It seems that motorists will, if faced with hail, drive to their nearest service station and seek shelter under the canopy until the storm is over. We may have an open forecourt at one moment, but once the hail starts we'll soon have 20 to 25 cars, all parked close together, huddling away from the damaging hail.

The customers will all be very accommodating in squeezing together as closely as possible, and sitting in their cars. I will also be very accommodating in allowing my forecourt to be used as a mass parking area, with all sales coming to a grinding halt for the duration of the storm.

On this particular Tuesday, a motorcyclist had decided to park his bike under the canopy to avoid the storm. He clearly knew what was coming, as he sought shelter at least half-an-hour before hail started. I had decided to leave work early, as I wanted to get home before my own car got damaged in the storm, and managed to do so.

On arriving at work the next morning, I

received an e-mail from a customer who had lodged a complaint with head office. She said she had experienced extreme racism on my forecourt the previous day during the storm. She alleged that my staff had been racist and rude to her. She was now seeking legal help in suing me.

I always take matters like this very seriously, as racism will not be tolerated at my site, and nor will staff who mistreat customers in any way.

The long and short of the story was that the woman had a young child with her and she wanted to get the car under the canopy as the child was extremely upset by the hail hitting the windows. She had approached my staff to assist her, but they allegedly made derogatory remarks to her and refused to assist her in any way.

I decided to look at the CCTV footage to find out what had actually happened. If her allegations were true, I would be dealing with the staff members involved very seriously.

On the camera footage, I found the forecourt completely full of vehicles, and saw the woman in her car on the fringe of the forecourt.

I then noticed her flashing her lights and waving her arms at my staff, who were standing in front of the shop under the canopy. The attendants looked in her direction, but did not go over to her vehicle. In the same circumstances, I too would not have walked out in the rain, hail and light-

ning to see what a customer wanted.

The woman then got out of her vehicle, opened an umbrella and ran over to my staff. I could see that she was highly agitated.

My staff told me later that she had wanted them to move the motorcycle that had been parked there earlier so that she could park in that bay out of the storm. The attendants told her that they could not move a customer's private vehicle, but she insisted that they should.

The incident escalated from there. I watched the customer rampaging around the forecourt, telling any member of staff what she thought about them and what was going to happen to them if they did not immediately move the bike, as her child was extremely upset.

I'm sure the child was upset as he was now sitting by himself in the vehicle in a hailstorm, while his mother was walking around my forecourt shouting at my staff!

Needless to say, I called the woman to tell her my side of the story, but she informed me that a case had been opened with the police and that the matter was going ahead. I was happy to hear this and welcomed what she had done, as I am quite content for a third party to come in and hear both sides of the story.

I am still waiting for the police to come and get a statement from me, but I have my file and video footage ready for when that happens.

Learn, adapt and enjoy!

OUR OPINION

Jannie Herbst **Editor**
jannie@leisurewheels.com



More than ten years ago the launch of the Toyota Hilux Legend 35 was held on the island of Madagascar. On the programme was a tough 4x4 trail that took the fleet of Hilux bakkies through some of most spectacular areas of the island.

We were just about to set off when the legendary Toyota logistics man, Willie van Greunen, came storming down the line of bakkies, red in the face with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, snorting like an angry Brahman bull.

We later found out why Willie was so upset: one of the lifestyle media guests had jumped into a Hilux 4x4 and, with a straight and serious face, said to Willie: "So why on earth does this car have two gear levers?"

We've seen it so many times over the years: people who should know at least the theoretical principles of 4x4 operation, but don't, nevertheless embark on an epic 4x4 expedition. They either rise to the occasion when the chips are down, or they don't.

A British expat couple joined our annual *Leisure Wheels* Adventure Safari a few years ago. This middle-aged executive and his delightful wife had extremely limited off-road experience, but had never driven in desert sand before.

When we informed the executive that he needed to deflate his very capable 4x4's tyres to one bar, he essentially told us we were raving mad and that there was no way the vehicle would be able to operate with such low tyre pressure. That's what the vehicle's manual said, and that was it.

So we left it. The Namib desert has a way of sorting out such matters in its own way and its own time.

So he got stuck inside the first 50m of tackling the Namib sand. And was recovered. Still he maintained that his chosen tyre pressure of 1,8 bar was more than sufficient. Another 100m later he was stuck again, and had to be recovered. After the third extraction, and with the situation clearly turning into a bit of an embarrassment, he most reluctantly agreed to deflate the tyres to 1,1 bar.

From that very moment on he – in his eyes – became a sand driving god. After two days of sand driving, he even started dishing out advice over the radio to other drivers who got bogged down, or were having trouble with a particular dune! It was a complete turnaround!

It is indeed a transformation we've seen many times over the years. People starting out terrified of the Namib desert's imposing sand dunes,

then getting bogged down on an insignificant heap of sand, learning from that situation, getting stuck again, learning again – and soon they adapt, and understand how much momentum is needed, where and when.

A case in point is the experience of Kirby and Morne Assam, who joined us for this year's Safari in a Toyota Hilux 3.0D4-D, as featured in this magazine. The Assam couple were clearly concerned about the dune driving – they had never driven in such conditions before.

Despite plenty of encouragement and tips and tyre deflation, the Toyota duly got stuck on the very first small dune we encountered.

"When in doubt, floor it," we suggested, trying to convince the Assams to employ a dab more momentum – the key to driving in sand that does require a bit of a mind shift.

A few minutes later our Uri Adventures guides led the way over a few smaller dunes, again confirming their earlier instructions that drivers should always stay in the tracks. So, remembering the "when in doubt..." encouragement but completely forgetting the "stay in the tracks" instruction, the Assams left the tracks

while scaling a dune with a slip-face on the other side, Morne not tapping off at all.

The result was a Toyota that flew so high and so far that Toyota's Dakar Rally star, Giniel de Villiers, would have been impressed!

Thankfully, Kirby and Morne were okay, as was the Hilux. It could easily have turned out differently.

But it was another vital lesson learned, and from that moment on the Hilux team, like the company executive a few years before, became sand driving gods. As seems to be the trend, they even started dishing out advice to the other teams too, chattering away on the two-way radio.

What are the morals of the story then?

At least know the basics of your 4x4;

That traction and stability control should be OFF when driving in the sand;

That one should listen to the advice of experienced guides who have been driving in the dunes for decades;

Never, ever leave the tracks of the vehicle in front of you;

And lastly, never leave the tracks of the vehicle in front of you!

• See pages 44 to 75. **W**





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Dune driving dents the ego



OUR OPINION

Gerhard Horn **Features Editor**
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I learned a few lessons on our recent trip to Namibia with a selection of SA's best double cab bakkies.

First and foremost, you should always fill your tank when the opportunity presents itself. Our managing editor, Jannie Herbst, had warned us on the first evening that there were no petrol stations on our route the next day, so we should fill our tanks in the morning. I decided that half a tank was probably enough and my trip computer said I had more than enough range for the Divorce Pass, and then some. So, instead of waking up early to fill the car, I snoozed for another 15 minutes.

The Isuzu KB I was driving started coughing about 30km short of our destination and 5km later, it died. As if that wasn't bad enough, I had to communicate my misfortune via radio, which meant that every other car could hear the most shameful announcement I've ever had to make. Trust me when I say that you don't want to be the "chop" that runs out of diesel, especially when you are a so-called motoring writer who should have known better.

Unfortunately, that's not the only time my self-esteem was dented during our epic adventure. There's nothing that damages a man's ego quite as thoroughly as dune driving.

If I remember correctly, I was the second person on the trip to fall victim to the Namib's unpredictability. The first casualty was a Hilux, but as we would learn over the following two days, getting stuck had very little to do with the cars. It was all about the driver and his/her willingness to commit to the art of dune driving. It's so very different to any other kind of driving and you really have to force yourself to do something that simply doesn't come naturally when you've been driving on many types of surface for more than ten years.

I had two big problems, the first being an inability to judge when I needed to remove my foot from the throttle. You have to keep it planted to reach the top, but you need to lift it at the right moment, to ensure that you don't ramp the car over the edge. I eventually understood the sand's resistance enough to tap off at the right time to get over the edge but, psychologically, it's a whole

different game.

It's fine with the smaller dunes, but it's a lot more difficult to push yourself over the edge when you don't really know what's on the other side. Our tour guide usually announced that we had a "steep one" coming up, but even that doesn't prepare you.

You start by powering up the dune, lift off at the right time while hoping the car reaches the top and then there's nothing but blue sky in front of you. The car then pitches forward and suddenly you are faced with a slip face that seems as though it's never going to end.

Your first instinct is to brake, but as soon as you do that the car starts sliding sideways, which will inevitably lead to a world of pain and flying metal. As Isuzu's product communications manager was a few cars ahead of me, I really didn't want to announce a smashed KB over the radio!

It's an interesting and humbling game that you play with yourself, and it's something even the experts get wrong sometimes.

When our tour guide, Eben Delpert, came on the radio and

asked for the recovery car, I felt less ashamed about getting a KB buried up to its belly a few hours earlier.

If there's a lesson in all of this, it's that we should never be content about our driving ability, or refuse to accept that someone, somewhere might still be able to teach us something. I can't even begin to remember the number of times one of the drivers in our convoy made fun of a stranded car, only to get stuck minutes later. Murphy can be a cruel, heartless son of a gun!

In closing, I'd like to offer a piece of advice given to me by the driver of a bakkie that didn't need a recovery the entire time we were there. He just quietly stood and watched as the various drivers attempted numerous dunes and then chirped each other over the radio.

"Wait until the trip is over," he said, "and then you can start bragging without the fear of getting stuck on the very next dune".

That's great advice for any kind of off-road activity. Wait until you've completed every obstacle successfully before you pat yourself on the back, or else Murphy might sneak up and bite you in the bum. **LW**

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Forced creation of a five-cylinder Chevrolet



When help is not easily within reach, you sometimes have to make do with what you have around you, as W Dyck found out

The recent tale in *Leisure Wheels* about the old Landy that scored an unscheduled makeover brought back memories of my experience along with two friends, the late brothers Harald and Uwe Molzahn. Although it happened 55 years ago, I can recall precisely what happened on that fateful trip.

It was the Easter weekend of 1960 and, as usual, Namibians flocked to the coast. We set off in a 1946 Chevrolet Fleetline, not knowing what was awaiting us!

By the Friday afternoon we were playing ring-tennis on the main beach, blissfully unaware of how sore our muscles would feel the next day.

Harald, the older Molzahn brother, was due to spend a week or so with his parents on their farm, Rooikrantz, near Gibeon.

After a good breakfast the next day, and filling up the Fleetline, we hit the road.

The old six-cylinder purred along quite nicely for a while, and then there was a noise from the engine that nobody ever wants to hear – a sudden and loud bearing knock! We could not proceed any further, and our ordeal had started.

Harald, owner of the vehicle, was a fitter and turner, and brother Uwe was an apprentice motor mechanic. They set about stripping the engine right there, next to the busy road between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, which had not been tarred back then.

The sump came off first, to determine the internal damage. The culprit was soon exposed as a seized big-end bearing on cylinder number three. After quite a struggle, it was

eventually freed.

Uwe set off hitch-hiking for Walvis Bay, to find a suitable replacement part. Eventually he was back, but shockingly it was found that the new shells were a fraction too big! What now?

Time was precious and something had to be done fast. The shells had to be scraped at the ends to make them fit, and to achieve this, a concrete road marker was simply removed and used as a milling machine! By early afternoon the sump was bolted back, fresh oil had been added and the engine came back to life.

Careful driving took us through to Walvis Bay, where we picked up a wooden crate of tomatoes for the folk on the farm. We were now heading for Maltahöhe on a gravel road that today is the C14.

Just before the Kuiseb Canyon, fate struck again. Same story – the new bearing had called it a day and we were stranded again.

In a situation like this there is no substitute for initiative, and this time the brothers decided to pull the number three piston and con-rod together!

Off came the sump once more, and the cylinder head this time, to get rid of the inner moving parts and save the crankshaft. By then it had become pretty dark and cold. We had just one blanket to share, taking turns, and luckily the tomatoes helped to quench our thirst and still our hunger. It was definitely not a night to remember. The desert becomes extremely cold, and made our aching muscles even worse.

Early next morning, after more

tomatoes but no coffee, it was my task to put back the sump while the cylinder head and the rest were tackled by the brothers.

Eventually everything was ready for take-off and believe me, we just about did that! We now had a five-cylinder Chevy motor and it developed a noticeable vibration, which only calmed a bit at a steady speed of 60 miles per hour, or today's 100km/h.

Nobody could wipe the smiles off our faces.

Suddenly we noticed a bakkie approaching, and the driver trying frantically to attract our attention. It was the brothers' father, who had realised something had gone wrong, and come in search of us.

Because of the vast distances one has to travel in Namibia, the locals are accustomed to "making a plan". This was a good example, as father Molzahn had loaded a 100-litre drum of petrol onto his International bakkie before leaving the farm. Such farsightedness is known locally as "weitblick".

Harald and I continued in the vulnerable Chevy, while Uwe joined his dad in the bakkie, travelling behind us.

Our adventures were far from over. Travelling at quite a speed, we were suddenly confronted by an unexpected gate across the road. Harald had to make a split-second decision on what to do, as stopping was almost impossible.

I shouted, "Ram the gate open", but Harald, in total desperation, swerved the heavy Fleetline to the right, stopping millimetres from the farmer's fence! The impact on the left front

tyre was such that gravel forced its way between the tyre and the rim, but without causing a puncture.

Well, when calm was restored, the four of us had a good laugh, some sandwiches and coffee, which dear father Molzahn had brought along, before continuing the final leg of this unforgettable journey.

At last we made it to the farm where the "missus" was delighted to welcome us. After a good sleep and a solid farm breakfast, Uwe and I were taken to the nearby station where we boarded the next train to Windhoek.

By then it was Monday, and I can assure you that our employers were not in the least amused when we only clocked in on Tuesday morning. (I was an apprentice electrician back then.)

That adventure in the Fleetline remained the most memorable of quite a number of escapades during my youth.

Unbelievable? Believe it – for sure! **W**

About the Author

Wolf Dyck is a born and bred Namibian, and as such, he will never forget the most exciting and memorable years of his life, when the world was still intact.

Over the years, he has moved all over SA, but he currently finds himself in Vryheid in northern Kwazulu-Natal, where he's constantly in pursuit of growing his Ford collection.

He urges readers to also share their own adventures, before they go lost forever.

ADVENTURE DRIVE VOLVO V60 CROSS COUNTRY

The Kirsten family live in Durbanville, near Cape Town, and they are keen on mountain biking. They set out for the trails at every opportunity.

A splendid Swede!



Many people have taken to the sport of mountain biking with great enthusiasm, spending small fortunes on bicycles and other gear. There are also those who believe that your bike should be transported in appropriate fashion – for instance, by a Volvo V60 Cross Country

Text: Danie Botha Photography: Jannie Herbst



The V60's cabin is as modern as they come, with the Active TFT crystal display right in front of the driver, and the "floating" centre stack and LCD display completing a neat yet sophisticated layout.

In the Cape Epic mountain bike race, you and your partner have to ride over an 800km route, taking in some 15 000m of accumulated climbs along the way. That's a week of riding, and a long way in rugged terrain.

But if you drive a Volvo V60 Cross Country, that's just around the corner. And if you drive economically, you can probably complete the distance on one tank of fuel.

Driving the latest V60 on a winding road near Durbanville got us pondering the attraction of mountain biking. To get to the starting point, you need a good outdoorsy vehicle. So perhaps the mountain biking fad is just an excuse to drive a lekker car – like a Volvo V60 Cross Country!

Ah, the Volvo. Upon receiving news of the Volvo's imminent arrival in SA, colleague Gerhard Horn proclaimed it his favourite car – ever. That's because of the way it looks, the space, the safety, and the benefit of all-wheel drive in tricky conditions. Yep, being a family man changes priorities, but this Volvo does seem to take the practical but sometimes boring station wagon idea and turn it into a more beautiful, trendy and practical option that can also handle some rough tracks.

The Cross Country derivative is obviously based on the V60 station wagon, which in

Volvo V60 Cross Country D4 SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	2,4-litre, five-cylinder, 20-valve
Power	140 kW @ 4000r/min
Torque	420Nm @ 1500-3000r/min
Gearbox	Six-speed Geartronic automatic
Drivetrain	Permanent AWD, Haldex system
Electronic driving aids	DSTC, hill descent control
Claimed ground clearance	201mm
Price	R519 900 (standard)
Maintenance plan	Five-year/100 000km



turn is based on the S60 sedan. For its more adventurous role, it has an extra 65mm in ground clearance. That doesn't mean you can tackle the Rubicon trail, but with 201mm of clean air under its belly, it is well up to most rough roading.

It also has Volvo's all-wheel drive system. This doesn't mean you can drive over big boulders – just that it has better grip and traction.

Volvo says the AWD, along with a sporty suspension set-up that includes torque vectoring and a traction control system developed to enhance cornering, provides a very sporty vehicle. It excels on mountain passes – dirt or tar.

Our steed was the top Inscription model, fitted with optional 19-inch aluminium rims with low profile tyres – a R7000 extra. These wheels look absolutely beautiful, but they are less effective when you head off the beaten track.

Still, it all fits in with our mountain bike theory. People want to look the part when they arrive at the cycling venue while also having enough space for the family, the riding gear and other paraphernalia that mountain bikers need. And this Cross Country certainly looks the part!

And then there's safety. Because mountain

ADVENTURE DRIVE VOLVO V60 CROSS COUNTRY



The Cross Country and the Thule rack in docking mode, ready to receive some bikes.

biking can result in broken bones, riders really want a rough-road vehicle that provides a sense of safety while they are travelling to and from their excursions. And this Volvo is as safe as they come.

Scandinavians Assar Gabrielson and Gustaf Larson founded Volvo in 1927, and one of their biggest aims was to create safe cars. So they invented all kinds of safety features, including the seat belt, back in 1959.

The Cross Country is a typical example of a modern, safe Volvo. Besides the normal army of airbags, ABS braking and so forth, the vehicle is equipped with technology known as IntelliSafe – smart technology that includes

“City Safety, Collision Warning with Full Auto Brake Function and Pedestrian Detection”. It even has... Cyclist Detection! Imagine that conversation piece at an MTB club meeting!

Another cool function definitely worth a mention at the bikers’ gathering is the Active High Beam system. At night, the V60’s Active Bending Bi-Xenon headlights are always on high beam. When another car approaches, the system makes all kinds of calculations and shades your car’s lights just enough to avoid dazzling the oncoming traffic.

On the “active safety” front, there is also Volvo’s Dynamic Stability and Traction Control (DSTC), which will, in partnership with the



“It’s a bird! It’s a plane! No, it’s definitely a bird!” Taking a break with the Kirsten family, the V60 Cross Country strikes a classyy pose. It features a Haldex all-wheel drive system, which sends power where it is needed, when it is needed. It’s a capable rough roader, but definitely not a hardcore 4x4 that can tackle dongas and rocks.

AWD system, keep you on the road in the corners, even if you push a bit too hard.

And if you are heading down a steep, rough slope, you have a Hill Descent Control system to call into action, to keep the speed at a constant, low velocity.

On the luxury front, the Cross Country gets all the bells and whistles. These include climate control, plenty of leather all round, electrically adjustable seats up front, an Active TFT crystal driver's display and a high performance sound system that provides quite outstanding acoustics.

So what about the actual driving experience?

It is indeed very sporty. Although our test model was the D4, powered by a five-cylinder turbodiesel engine, the Cross Country certainly packs some on-road punch. The engine delivers 140 kW of power at 4000r/min and 420 Nm of torque from 1500 to 3000r/min. Coupled with the six-speed Geartronic automatic gearbox, it offers spritely performance and excellent fuel consumption. In fact, Volvo claims the D4 will complete the 0-100km/h sprint in 8,9 seconds yet it says the car will need less than six litres of fuel for every 100km.

Our unit came with the optional gearshift paddles (R1800 extra) but, quite frankly, they



On the road to another mountain biking trail, bikes in tow.



So you want to try the bike?

Looking for some bike action, but have no idea where to start? Our in-house mountain biking guru

Elise Kirsten has some tips:

Mountain biking can cover a wide range of activities, from the leisurely pedal through natural surroundings to improving your skill on increasingly technical trails, cross country marathon racing, downhill extreme and more.

If you're new to the sport, here are some tips to help you get going.

Besides the bike, your essentials will include a helmet and a good pair of cycling shorts. Padding is vital as without some cushioning a saddle can become very hard, very quickly. If you are not into Lycra, there's a wide range of mountain-biking baggies that have a built-in padded chamois.

The helmet is essential. Indeed, it's illegal to cycle on public roads without one and mountain-bike race organisers have a "no helmet, no ride" policy.

Another important item is a pair of padded cycling gloves. Bumping over gravel trails and down mountain paths will cause a fair amount of vibration, and cushioned gloves offer protection, reducing pressure and numbness. Newcomers also tend to hang on to the handlebars quite tightly, especially going downhill, and this can be tiring for hands and arm muscles.

Hanging on to the bars too tightly is not

recommended. A tip to help you control your bike when going downhill is to think of your arms as a form of suspension. Keep them bent while maintaining a reasonably firm grip, with one finger from each hand resting on the brake levers.

A small but important item is a water bottle. You don't want to get dehydrated.

As you progress, you might invest in cycling shoes and clipless pedals, which are highly recommended. The term "clipless" is a bit confusing since you actually clip in to the pedal's cleats.

The reason people are hesitant to invest in these pedals is usually fear-based rather than economic. You don't want to fall off, right? The idea of having your feet fixed to the pedals can be daunting. However, there are many good reasons to move from flat pedals to clipless ones. When your feet are clipped in, you are able to provide constant power by utilising the upstroke in addition to the power that you deliver with the downstroke. The constant power can help you maintain better traction on steep climbs where there is a layer of gravel, sand or rocks. And, of course, your feet don't slip off the pedals.

The best way to get used to the clipless system is to practise clipping and unclipping your shoes from the bike while holding on to a counter or railing for stability. From there you can progress to practising on a patch of grass, where a few spills may be inevitable but you won't suffer more than a bruised ego. Once you have the hang of it you won't look back. There are some people, however, who insist on sticking with flat pedals, and at the end of the day it's all about getting out and enjoying the ride.

A cycling shirt is also not a must-have but the special shirts do have handy pockets and zips for storage of cellphones, keys and other bits and pieces.

A bike computer is also nice to have, especially if you want to start a cycling fitness programme. The computer will help you to measure your progress.

Lastly, if you are not running tubeless tyres, you'll need a small saddlebag containing a spare tube, tyre levers and a set of Allen keys.

To inflate the tyre, you'll need to carry a mini-pump or a high pressure CO₂ canister. Your local bike shop will be able to advise you as you progress to new levels of proficiency.

Happy riding!

The Cross Country is quite at home on gravel roads, where the AWD system and 201mm in ground clearance come in handy. As a mountain biker transporter, the Volvo ranks highly. It's also safe, fast, economical, practical, refined and rather fashionable.





Full speed ahead, captain! The five-cylinder diesel engine delivers 140 kW and 420 Nm of torque, and drive is distributed via a six-speed Geartronic automatic gearbox.



are not needed. Left to its own devices, the six-speed 'box does a grand job, no matter the terrain or situation.

For petrol-head mountain bikers, there is the T5 option. The 2,5-litre five-cylinder produces a handy 187 kW at 5400r/min and 360 Nm between 1800 and 4200r/min.

So that's the new Volvo V60 Cross Country. It looks pretty good, it's fast and economical, it's super safe (even for cyclists!), it can handle some rough roads, it is luxurious, comfy and spacious, and it is as fashionable as a Christian Dior handbag.

The V60 ticks a lot of boxes, yet it is also practical and sensible.

Okay, so mountain biking is not just an excuse to drive a lekker car. We can understand the allure of riding through some beautiful Western Cape forest or vineyard. And it sure



Dad Steven, mom Elise and daughter Hailey – all mountain biking mad.

beats running yourself silly in a gym.

We'll drive the Volvo V60 Cross Country with its fancy bike rack, and deliver mountain bikes to their riders, anywhere they like. That certainly seems like, well... the noble thing to do.

Happy driving! **LW**

What a rack!

A Swedish car needs a Swedish bike rack, right? You bet, even if this cool three-bike Thule rack, which mounts on the Cross Country's tow bar, is actually made in Poland.

The Thule EuroClassic 929 rack weighs 20,7kg and can carry three bikes with a combined weight of up to 60kg, or a maximum of 25kg per bike. This top of the range, full size bike carrier comes in at the sharpest end of the bike rack business. Contact your Volvo dealer for more information.



New 200 goes bos



Toyota's Land Cruiser 200 range has always been somewhat larger than life – bigger engine, bigger space, even bigger door handles on the inside. Now the 200 has received a mid-life makeover, and it's even larger! It's also the most "flash" it's ever been. So we did the logical thing: we took the R1,15-million VX, with all its chrome, to the Hennops Off-Road trail and did some serious 4x4 driving

Text: Danie Botha **Photography:** Jannie Herbst

At nearly 2m wide, the Land Cruiser 200 is a tight fit on a 4x4 track like this section, leading up to Hennops Off-road trail's most infamous obstacle.



The 200 VX has a wading depth of 700mm – and plenty of 4x4 party tricks. Most notable is the new Multi-Terrain Select (MTS) system, with various terrain settings. It also has Toyota's highly regarded A-TRAC traction control, which made light work of the obstacles. Below: Up hills or down dales, the 200 VX easily handled the tough trail.



The two young men, standing within earshot of photographer Jannie Herbst at Hennops Off-Road trail's infamous grade five obstacle, were not impressed by the sight of a brand-new Land Cruiser 200 on this rocky, rutted track.

"Jeez, I wouldn't drive my new 200 here," said one.

"I agree," replied his mate. "But at least you know he is going to do his best not to scratch it."

There had been three 4x4s in the line when we arrived – two Ford Ranger double cabs and a late model Toyota Land Cruiser Prado. But after inspecting the obstacle, the drivers of all three decided to take the escape road.

To tell you the truth, I'd have preferred to take the slip road, too. Driving a 4x4 that costs as much as a house through this rocky terrain is nerve-racking, to say the least. But we had come here to drive the new Cruiser 200 VX on this track, which had hosted the Bridgestone 4x4 Club Challenge final just 24 hours before our visit. And this obstacle was one of the tests the teams had to complete.

It didn't seem like such a grand plan to attempt one of the toughest Club Challenge tests in a fancy 200 VX; maybe the more off-road oriented GX, which has the same girth, engine, gearbox and drivetrain but a lot less flash and cash.

Before we tackle that obstacle, let's talk 4x4 drivetrain. Toyota has always claimed that its top Cruiser is designed to "house occupants in lavish comfort while traversing the most demanding terrain."

The latest incarnation of the Cruiser 200 is equipped with Toyota's Multi-Terrain Select (MTS) system, which enhances the vehicle's performance by integrating with the A-TRAC

traction control system. The MTS system has six modes for off-road driving: Rock, Rock & Dirt, Mogul, Loose Rock, Mud & Sand and Auto.

The system also has Crawl Control, a highly advanced traction control system for extreme off-road use that is supposed to take over the throttle and brake functions and just leave the driver to aim the vehicle.

So there is no air suspension button to move the big Cruiser up or down, but it has a claimed 230mm in ground clearance. And unlike an air-sprung set-up, the Cruiser's wheels more readily stay in contact with terra firma, which is exactly what you need when driving off-road.

It has a transfer case, too, and low range features straight cut gears.

On the more flashy side, the 200 has a new Multi-Terrain Monitor (MTM) system. This uses four cameras to provide a 360-degree view of the vehicle's surrounds, displayed in the Multi-Information Display at the top of the centre stack. The system also shows "lean and pitch", for what that's worth.

Actually, we prefer just to adjust the side mirrors so that we can see the rear wheels. Watching the display, the terrain and your spotter can get a bit complicated, especially on a grade five obstacle where you have to keep your wits about you.

So back to this infamous obstacle, then. At least it was looking in slightly

better shape than we've seen it before.

With a small crowd watching in anticipation, I edged forward slowly, slowly over the rocks. Low range was selected, the MTS system was set for Loose Rock, and the side mirrors adjusted so I could see the rear wheels. Slowly we climbed, with nary a hint of wheel spin, the V8 twin-turbo diesel engine at idle.

The last section is the worst. A big step-up looms, and there is no way the Cruiser is going straight up there without leaving expensive body parts behind. So I place the left wheel on the left embankment, aiming the right 18-inch wheel for the best line up that slope.

Burble-burble-burble-burble...

And we were through, without any wheel spin, wheels lifting in the air, or any other drama. In fact, it was a bit of an anti-climax.



The Land Cruiser 200's side profile has been nipped and tucked, but the biggest styling changes are at the front and rear. The bold front-end styling, which comes with LED headlights, is particularly, well, bold. The VX rides on 18-inch wheels while the GX, which sells for almost R300 000 less, has the more off-road friendly 17-inch variety.

FIRST DRIVE

TOYOTA LAND CRUISER 200 VX

Toyota Land Cruiser 200 SPECIFICATIONS

Engine:	V8 twin-turbo diesel, 4460cc
Power:	173 kW @ 3200r/min
Torque:	615 Nm @ 1800-2200r/min
Gearbox:	Six-speed automatic; transfer case
4WD:	Permanent, with centre diff lock in high range
4WD aids:	MTS, MTM, A-TRAC
Ground clearance:	230mm
Wading depth:	700mm
Kerb weight:	2740kg
Towing capacity (braked trailer):	3500kg
Fuel capacity:	138 litres (combined)
Fuel consumption (including 4x4):	15,6 litres/100km
Range:	884km
Price:	R1 141 700
Service plan:	Five-year/90 000km
Service intervals:	10 000km



Everyone was expecting something exciting to happen, but the Cruiser just idled through as though it was negotiating a pavement at the shopping mall.

Jannie seemed a bit disappointed. He had probably been hoping for some dust flying, wheels spinning and lifting, or any such action. Instead, all he got was “Burburle-burburle-burburle-burburle”.

Gosh, this machine is capable. A big part of its secret is that burble -- a 4,5-litre V8 twin-turbo diesel that delivers 173 kW of power at 3200r/min and 615 Nm of torque from 1800r/min. However, it's the virtual lack of turbo lag that makes this engine so impressive, especially in a vehicle that tips the scale at 2,7 tons.

The gearbox is a six-speed automatic, and works like a charm. The drive is permanently sent to all four wheels, with an open centre differential that can be locked in high range for a 50/50 split between the front and rear axles.

Driving to the next obstacle, the Cruiser's girth on a tight track was obvious. But even over the roughest terrain, it retains that unbreakable impression. You really do get the feeling that, if there were to be a head-on collision between this Cruiser and a Prasa Afro 4000 locomotive, the Cruiser would come off better. It just feels so solid.

Not that the 200's composure in the corners is as dynamically accomplished as a BMW X5 or Mercedes GLE or Audi Q7. To be able to drive through dongas and rivers and over rocks and other nasties, the Cruiser's suspension is a compromise between comfort and highly capable off-road ability.

Unlike most of its premium

rivals, Toyota has not gone the air suspension route. Instead, the 200 features double wishbones up front and a multi-link system at the back, supported by old-fashioned steel springs and shock absorbers.

However, driving at 120km/h on the open road, even on badly pock-marked surface, the ride is simply superb. You don't drive along, you waft along most comfortably. And it's not that the Cruiser doesn't like corners, but it does display a fair amount of body roll, combined with a not-so-sporty steering feedback.

Mind you, the typical Land Cruiser 200 owner is not going to try drifting his 4x4 through the corners, so considering its ability and the awesome ride, it all makes good sense.

The cabin features some upgrades. The centre console and instrument panel are new, with reworked ergonomics for easier operation. All the Toyota's driver-related controls have now been positioned around the gear lever.

The new centre console features a nine-inch high definition display linked to a nine-speaker Electro Multi-Vision (EMV) audio system that provides excellent acoustics. Satellite navigation is also standard fare.

The VX's steering wheel is covered in leather and wood, and a full-colour TFT Multi-Information Display in the dashboard provides information via the trip computer.

The vast seven-seat cabin is kitted out in new leather trim, featuring contrast-stitching. And when we say vast, it really is vast. The 200 is just about 2m wide, and the cabin itself is 1640mm wide. That means you can have your fridge in the centre console, as this

With the MTS system on the “Loose Rock” setting, and with 615 Nm of torque available from 1800r/min, courtesy of the twin-turbo V8 diesel mill, the 200 hardly noticed any climbs, or rocks.



The cabin is an opulent affair with leather and top-notch finishes all round. A nine-speaker high-end sound system, a full colour TFT display directly in front of the driver and more buttons than you'll find in the space shuttle ensure an upmarket driving experience. Right: The six-speed automatic gearbox and 173 kW V8 engine complement each other splendidly.



Cruiser does, and still have plenty of space for the passengers.

Safety has also been elevated to a higher level. The Cruiser gets the normal active systems comprising ABS, EBD and vehicle stability control (VSC), but it is now enhanced with the addition of Toyota's Pre-Crash Collision Mitigation System.

Using a multi-wave radar sensor and a forward-facing camera, the system can detect a potential collision with an object or vehicle. As soon as a threat is registered, the system will sound an alarm. If the driver does not take sufficient action, according to the computer's calculations, the pre-crash system will automatically apply brakes to mitigate the situation.

We actually had the unexpected opportunity to test this feature on the way to the Hennops trail. We were cruising along at a comfortable 110km/h when a young lady in an old Ford Fiesta drove straight through an intersection without looking in our direction. Although I applied brake pressure, the system took over and applied full ABS, with alarms ringing and the emergency indicators activated. The Cruiser stopped very quickly, and after the Fiesta had cleared the road the Cruiser deactivated the emergency stop.

The inattentive young lady probably got the fright of her life when she saw the big Cruiser bearing down on her driver's door. Hopefully

next time she'll stop and look before entering a crossing.

Talking about looks, the latest Cruiser 200 features bold new styling. Toyota calls it a "powerful and prominent front facade". Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, they say, but personally I preferred the previous 200's less brash appearance.

However, a man on a bicycle in the suburbs almost had a big prang when the Cruiser wafted past. All we could hear was a loud "Yooooooh!" through the open driver's window, and in the rear-view mirror I saw the cyclist almost having a tar-tasting session all by himself. And a few obvious Toyota fans also expressed their approval in parking lots, so it's all very subjective.

Back to Hennops we go, and on to obstacle eight, as per the previous day's Bridgestone 4x4 Club Challenge. This is another rocky, heavily rutted climb. It does not look as if a 4x4 is supposed to be able to drive up here. Another perfect test for the Cruiser 200, then.

Mindful of possible damage to the R1,15-million vehicle, I take the least offensive line through the rocks, the MTS system in "Rock" mode.

Burble-burble-burble-burble-burble.

Spin-spin-spin.

Burble-burble-burble-burble-burble.

And up she went, albeit with little bit of wheel spin, but there wasn't a touch under

the Cruiser's belly. It is really impressive, this Land Cruiser 200 VX.

Remember, this is the luxury version. The GX, which sells for almost R300 000 less and is more overland oriented with a snorkel and 17-inch wheels and cloth seats and so on, is the more obvious choice for a rough-and-tough 4x4 job. Yet the VX had cruised through the obstacles, feeling right at home.

Driving a Toyota Land Cruiser 200 VX around town and on the open road and on an off-road track initially seemed like overkill, but after spending some time with it, we can understand why one could drive it every day.

It's wonderfully refined. The cabin is a classy, upmarket and extremely spacious. The V8 twin-turbo engine is a beauty, and although it's not the most powerful turbodiesel in the premium SUV segment, it's plenty strong and feels as though it will last a very long time.

But maybe the most impressive feature of the new Cruiser 200 is the feeling of indestructibility. You feel as though you are in a cocoon that could survive a nuclear blast. It's a feeling not evident in all the other premium SUVs that compete against it.

So can the Cruiser, as per Toyota's claim, still "house its occupants in lavish comfort while traversing the most demanding terrain?"

Oh yes, it most certainly can. **LW**

A legend lives on

After more than two decades, the Vitara name is back, but this time it's stuck on the back of a compact crossover. Is it worthy of its nomenclature?

Text: Gerhard Horn

The new Suzuki Vitara has to be the biggest surprise of 2015. I read a few international reports, looked at the specification sheet and had a few discussions in the office about Suzuki's new entrant into the compact crossover segment. Why sully the noble Vitara name with a cute off-road wannabe? And where does this leave Suzuki's other soft-roader, the SX4?

As it turns out, the Vitara has the ability to punch way above its weight in the off-road stakes. It gets close to the current compact crossover champion, the Renault Duster. Yup, that's how good it is.

Oddly, Suzuki never mentioned the Duster in the product presentation, but chose to focus on fashionable front-wheel drive derivatives, from

Citroën to Peugeot and Ford.

The model we chose to drive first was the top-of-the-line GLX with a 1,6-litre naturally aspirated petrol engine, five-speed manual gearbox and all-wheel drive. It retails for R320 000, but it is possible to get an all-wheel drive derivative from around R290 000.

Usually at this kind of launch you get to drive around a few tarred mountain passes and up the gravel driveway to a fancy restaurant, just to give you a taste of what most people consider to be an "active adventurous lifestyle". Not so with Suzuki.

We got in the car and gave the route schedule a once-over. It was 80% gravel, including a few badly corrugated mountain passes. It was a brave move by the company,



but one that would pay off immensely.

Within 50km it became apparent that this wasn't some quasi off-roader. If I had to hazard a guess, I'd say the new Vitara would be able to do around 80% of the things you can do in a Duster, at which point its ground clearance would hamper progress.

I drove the Vitara on roads that would have ripped an EcoSport, C4 Cactus and Renault Captur to shreds. Not only did the Vitara take them all in its stride, but it did so with minimal compromise to ride comfort.

The AllGrip all-wheel drive system allows the driver to select between a number of driving modes. These include a Lock mode, which invokes a limited slip diff to brake the spinning wheel, thereby transferring torque to the wheels that retain traction. It's rather basic, but as in the Duster, the Vitara is all the better for it. The system also has a hill descent control function, to give the driver added confidence on slopes.

But the biggest surprise was the front-wheel drive model, which will probably be the best seller. With prices starting at just under R240 000, it's a proper bargain.

We were allowed to drive the front-wheel drive model on the same roads as the AllGrip, and the difference was hardly noticeable. Of course, it depends on what kind of driving you want to do, but if it's

no more difficult than the average dirt road, the front-wheel drive model will be more than up to the task.

Interior comfort is top-notch and the Vitara isn't lacking in luxury or safety features. Electrically operated front windows and exterior mirrors are standard, as is remote central locking, manual air-conditioning with pollen filter, and a four-speaker audio system. The latter is MP3/WMA compatible and equipped with a CD player, FM/AM tuner, USB socket and Bluetooth connectivity for hands-free phoning. A 12V accessory socket is also provided. All of this is standard across the range.

Boot capacity is 375 litres, which is above average in the segment, and all-round space on the inside is generous.

The only thing I don't like about this car is the way it looks from the rear, but as style is a personal thing, that is not a big issue.

This is an excellent compact crossover that deserves the Vitara name that has been bestowed upon it. I like it very much, and the AllGrip model offers a more modern and safer alternative to our beloved Duster.

The Suzuki Vitara range is backed by a comprehensive three-year/100 000km warranty, as well as a four-year/60 000km service plan and a three-year roadside assistance package. Services are at 15 000km intervals. **LW**



The interior is clean, simple and easy to understand. All the equipment you want is included as standard across the range, including a sound system with USB input and Bluetooth connectivity.



We're not 100% sold on the rear styling of the Vitara, but at least it has a fairly sizeable boot.

A decent helping of X-ness

The first generation X1 sold in limited numbers in SA, but with the world turning towards the SUV, the second generation may find more success locally

BMW SA has launched the second generation of its smallest SUV, the X1.

When it was first launched in 2009, the X1 was in a class of one, but things are tougher this time round, with the Audi Q3 and Mercedes-Benz GLA also fighting for a slice of the premium compact crossover pie.

So, who is the X1 intended for? BMW says it is aimed at young, modern and sporty people with an active lifestyle who appreciate functionality. A decent helping of "X-ness" is also fairly important.

This "X-ness", as far as we can tell, is something that cannot be put into words. It's a deep-rooted quality that every BMW X car must have – the qualities that turn a great car into an exceptional one.

I have some experience of "X-ness", having spent the last few months behind the wheel of an X6 M50d long-term vehicle. It's an exceptional car in every respect – from the way it accelerates when you're pushing on, to the way it floats wonderfully when you aren't.

The X1 has the tough job of being the entry-level model to a range of cars that have

been at the top of their game for more than a decade. If people like it they will keep coming back for more.

The baby X doesn't disappoint. It's shorter than the model it replaces, but bigger in every other direction. It's not exactly family car size, but part of its appeal is its compact dimensions, which should make it perfect for zipping around town.

And you would be zipping, because the X1 comes with an impressive line-up of engines, and this time you can choose between front- and all-wheel drive.

Those of a green persuasion will enjoy the 18i, which is equipped with a three-cylinder turbocharged engine offering 100kW and 200Nm of torque.

Next in line is the 20i, which has a 2,0-litre turbocharged engine that delivers 140kW and 280Nm of torque. This 2,0-litre is also available as a 25i, pushing out 180kW and 350Nm.

The star of the show, however, is the 20d. This turbocharged diesel engine is a masterpiece and never fails to surprise in

whatever model it is used, but the 20d/X1 combo might be the best yet.

My co-driver and I were using every single one of the 140kW and 400Nm of torque available, but it still consumed diesel at a rate of only 6,4 l/100km. This gives the X1 a real world range of more than 1000km, which is the ultimate luxury if you hate stopping for fuel.

The 25i is likely to find favour with sporty drivers, but it's difficult to distinguish it from the 20d in terms of performance. The 25i has a few additional kW, but the 20d has the extra torque. It's the best compromise between frugality and performance in the X1 range and will probably be the volume seller.

The optional eight-speed automatic gearbox is a must-have. I've praised this gearbox many times for its lightning quick and silky smooth nature, and fitting it to an X1 has made zero change to effortless manner in which it operates.

Inside, the X1 is a class act. BMW has given the customer everything he/she might desire as standard, including a nice colour display with all the necessary inputs and connections. Customers can choose between four trim lines, all with their own characteristics.

As a driving machine on tar, it's top notch. It's more of a hot hatch than anything else and fairly entertaining on a sweeping mountain pass. The steering is direct and the car behaves exactly like you'd expect a BMW to behave.

The suspension is fairly sporty, which means it is slightly compromised on a gravel road, though it did cope with everything we threw at it. It's true, though, that few of these cars will ever see the kind of road we drove on, as their owners are unlikely to venture further on gravel than the entrance to a fancy hotel or eatery.

Not surprisingly, the X1 is expensive. Prices start at around R430 000, but the top model – the 20d with a nice trim-line, automatic gearbox and all-wheel drive – will cost in the region of R600 000.

Is it worth it? Well, that is for you to decide. **LW**

– Gerhard Horn



Gentleman's racer of choice?

After a long wait, we finally got our hands on a Range Rover Sport with a diesel engine. Is it the model of choice?

I'm rather fond of the Range Rover Sport, but until recently the only one I had driven was the supercharged 5.0-litre V8 petrol version, and an orange one at that.

As much as I enjoyed the experience, I knew it wasn't likely to be the hot seller in the range, so a phone call to Land Rover later, I had a TDV6 SE in the Leisure Wheels garage.

It's not the cheapest in the range, but it offers a nice balance between all the various attributes a Range Rover Sport should have – speed, elegance, luxury and that all-important feel good factor.

This time round the car was light blue, but the amount of attention it drew was more or less the same as I got in the orange one. The Range Rover, whether it be a Sport, Evoque or proper wide-body, is a cultural icon in SA, but that much I knew already thanks to Land Rover's impressive sales figures at the end of every month.

So, is it worth having a Range Rover Sport with a diesel engine?

Well, Land Rover certainly doesn't skimp on the luxury in the SE specification. As standard

it has grained leather seats, navigation, touch-screen infotainment, a banging sound system, dual-zone climate control, power tailgate and 20-inch alloy wheels. That's pretty much everything you need these days, and I can't think of a single thing I missed during the week I spent in its company.

As a daily driving machine it's superb. The noise insulation is excellent and the suspension simply glides at low speed. The only irritations in an otherwise perfect cabin are the skinny armrests and the touch-screen interface, which just begs to be replaced. I've driven a few entry-level compact crossovers with better infotainment systems this year, so struggling with a dim-witted entertainment system in a R1 million car is just not on.

To test the SE's off-road ability, I used it as a support vehicle in a recent off-road competition. This didn't involve any wild obstacles but rather a mix of gravel roads, some rocks and a few washed away surfaces. It handled these hindrances with ease, thanks to Land Rover's brilliant Terrain Response system and the standard air suspension,

which you can operate via a button next to the gear lever.

It may not have low range, but of all the luxury road-biased off-roaders out there, the Range Rover remains the best.

For a vehicle designed to stroll around on the highways and byways, the Range Rover Sport offers some serious off-road figures. Wading depth is claimed to be 850mm and the ground clearance, at its highest setting, is 278mm. Not bad for something with "Sport" in its name.

Unfortunately, that same "Sport" badge is let down by the turbocharged diesel engine. Don't get me wrong – it's a brisk machine, able to sprint to 100km/h in around eight seconds. I mean, 215kW and 600Nm of torque are nothing to scoff at, but I couldn't help but feel that it should have felt just a little faster.

It may be that I've got used to a triple-turbo BMW diesel in our long-term test vehicle, but the SE's turbo-lag was slightly annoying and the vehicle seems to hit a brick wall at 130km/h. At least the eight-speed automatic gearbox makes a decent effort, but a set of paddles behind the steering wheel would have been a welcome addition.

This model costs R1 157 900, which seems "reasonable" for a car that does so much, but if you are going to buy a "Sport," you might as well go the whole nine yards and get one with a sporty engine.

The Range Rover Sport with a diesel engine is a decent car, but personally I would go for the supercharged V6 petrol version. It's more responsive and the engine noises it makes are worth the R1 million all on their own! **LW**

– Gerhard Horn





Ride like an off-road boss!

Toyota Land Cruiser 79 overlanders are a dime a dozen, right? Not if you are talking about 4x4 Mega World's LC 79 V8 D4-D, no. This one is special. Riding on a state of the art Old Man Emu BP-51 suspension, this LC 79 combines on-road comfort with off-road racing bakkie-like handling, on tar and dirt. We went for a ride

Text: Danie Botha **Photographs:** Deon van der Walt

Australian crocodile wrangler

Steve Irwin would probably not have been overly impressed by the first sight of the 4x4 Mega World Toyota Land Cruiser 79 pick-up. And he probably would have said something like: "Crickey mate, that looks like a real Sydney Cruiser to me! Where are the big wheels, mate? And where are all the extravagant accessories?"

Indeed, this V8 D4-D single cab is a study in understatement, if ever there was one. Instead, it is a shining example of amazing all-round ability without being flash about the matter.

As far as Land Cruiser 79s go, the 4x4 Mega World version is a study in understatement. However, the trick suspension really sets it apart from the rest. The off-road racing style OME BP-51 set-up results in an overlander with the handling and sure-footedness of a rally car on a dirt road, combined with a comfy yet sporty ride on tar. It's the best of both worlds.



Emu BP-51 suspension.

The BP-51 system represents four years of development work at the company's Australian headquarters. It was tested in some of the toughest conditions you can imagine.

Essentially the high performance, internal bypass shocks provide a unique compromise between a proper off-road racing suspension set-up and a comfortable on-road ride.

The patent-pending, big-bore shocks with their remote

reservoirs can be fitted to a selection of vehicles with no modifications needed. So you can bolt in a race-ready suspension to your Hilux, Jeep Wrangler or Land Cruiser.

Normal shocks provide more damping the faster the piston inside the shock moves up and down. The BP-51 takes this one step further by also providing damping dependent on the position of the piston within the shock absorber's body, thanks to the internal bypass design.

The result is (and we can attest to this after driving the Cruiser both on and off the road) that the design affords the best of both worlds – a racing off-road suspension that provides a stable ride over the roughest terrain, with limited body roll, and an on-road suspension that provides a pliant, comfortable yet sporty ride.

It doesn't end there. The shocks are also adjustable for external compression and rebound – and the system can be adjusted after the items have been installed.

Like all good things in life, the Old Man Emu BP-51 set-up is not cheap. Prices start at R9 500 per shock absorber, so a complete set-up for this Cruiser will lighten your wallet by almost R40 000.

Still, if you want to ride like an off-road boss, this is the way to go...

As the late Mr Irwin might have said after driving this special Cruiser: "Crickey mate! It really does ride well. And it's fast, too!" LW

The BP-51 shocks have been developed over four years in the harsh Australian Outback, and feature an internal bypass system and external reservoirs. They are adjustable for external compression and rebound.

Discreet upgrades include ARB bull bar and rear bumper with a spare wheel mounting, IPF Intensity LED spotlights, an RSI aluminium canopy, two-way radio system, roof racks with an LED bar, aftermarket rims and fat Cooper SST Max tyres.

The cabin features a handful of upgrades too, including seat covers and a roof-console system.

The vehicle is driven daily by Deon Venter, CEO of 4x4 Mega World, all the way from Klerksdorp to the company's head office in Johannesburg.

Since Deon is also a competitor in the SA Cross Country championship, the bakkie's V8 engine features a chip and exhaust upgrade. However, the biggest upgrade can be found under the Cruiser's skin – the full Old Man

More information:

Tel. 011 454-2875; e-mail megaworld@oldmanemu.co.za; www.4x4megaworld.co.za.

Driving Sani one last time

Sani Pass will soon be tarred and we can't help but feel that some of the magic will be lost. We drove it one last time in our long-term Subaru Outback

Text and photography: Gerhard Horn

There's a store near the Nelson Mandela Capture Monument at Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. I don't remember what it was called, but I do remember that my brother and father were quite excited about it on their return from their mission to buy charcoal for the fire that evening.

They told me about all the things they had seen in the shop. "They sell everything – from toilet seats to replacement parts for tractors, and charcoal," my brother told me enthusiastically.

I wasn't as excited as they were, having seen many such shops in rural SA. However, I do recall thinking that it was an interesting spot to park a Subaru Outback, since the first-generation model was sold in more or less the same way in the UK.

Subaru did not invade Britain with a host of brand-new

dealerships and a massive marketing campaign, but chose to sell the Outback alongside the farming equipment in rural stores. In many ways, the Outback was the Hilux double cab of Europe. It was a car that farmers could use during the week for their activities, but luxurious enough for the drive to church on a Sunday morning. The fact that it was nearly unbreakable also helped a lot. As a result, the Outback has a stellar reputation in the UK and it continues to be a sales success to this day.

The same is unfortunately not true in SA, and it's hard to understand why. Is it brand loyalty to other vehicles that keeps people away from Subaru dealerships, or is it the station wagon body that puts people off? Whatever the reason, it's difficult to fathom why Subaru doesn't sell at

least 100 units a month. The Outback has everything going for it, and yet it remains largely ignored by the car buying public.

We've had one at *Leisure Wheels* for almost a year now and it has been sublime. Most of its time has been spent within the confines of the city, but it has also been on longer expeditions. An opportunity to test it on a rough track recently presented itself when my brother and I decided to take our father up Sani Pass one last time before the Chinese road construction crews move in with their tar barrels.

A top-ten drive

The plan was simple. Drive the first leg from Johannesburg to the bottom of Sani Pass on day one, drive up the pass on day two and drive down and home on day three. As often happens with good adventures, it didn't pan out that way...

The first day was a success. We made our way to the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands where we stopped to buy a few beers from Nottingham Road Breweries. Then we set off on the final 170km leg to our overnight destination in the Drakensberg foothills.

I was fairly excited, because I knew what lay ahead. Those rural roads are beautiful and curvy, and I hadn't been able to explore them on a previous visit.

The Outback is an off-roader, but at its core it's still a Subaru. The brand has a reputation for building cars that stick to the road like cow manure. Include a 2.5-litre Boxer engine, a



Above: Local brews for the passengers and a cup of coffee for the driver.

Left: The Subaru's spacious boot coped well, especially for three guys who did not pack logically.



With visibility down to 20 metres, it wasn't easy to get up the Sani Pass. At least the driver couldn't see the sheer drops on the side!

The local people make good use of the shiny new road between Mokhotlong and Sani Pass to move their cattle. The Subaru seemed to be the only car on the road that day.

The weather wasn't good, but the view from the stoep at the Lake Navarone retreat was beautiful.



fairly decent soundtrack from the exhausts and some mildly moist roads and you are in for a good time.

Unfortunately, my two passengers weren't used to being hustled along at a brisk pace. One of them is an engineer and the other a lawyer, so you can imagine their faces when they heard a tyre squeal for the first time.

I tried to keep them calm, assuring them that we were nowhere near the car's limits, but their pie-eyed expressions left me wondering whether they believed me.

To be fair, a car feels very different when you are sitting in a passenger seat rather than driving yourself. Behind the wheel, you get all sorts of feedback and the Outback was giving me plenty to work with. The steering is perfectly weighted and the car responded immediately to my input in the "Intelligent" driving mode. The only spanner in the works was the CVT gearbox, but I bypassed its clumsy self-shifting mode and used the paddles behind the steering wheel.

The sun setting in the distance made it a most enjoyable drive – indeed, a top ten placing on my personal list of best drives.

I settled down to a relaxed cruise for the last 50km. I enjoy a spirited drive as much as the next guy, but it was dark and the countryside was littered with Clover cows.

Our arrival was carefully planned to take place after dark. Neither of them had been to Sani Pass before, so I was hoping a majestic sunrise would reveal the mountain in all its glory but, alas, it was not to be.

Up and over

A thick mist descended on the region overnight, bringing visibility down to roughly 20 metres. My passengers wouldn't get the full impact of the pass, which is 30% driving and 70% psychological.

The Sani Pass isn't that tricky when you can only see 20m in every direction, but it's a different ball game when you are driving up that narrow road and you can actually see the vast drops on the right hand side.

"This isn't so bad," my brother commented from the rear seat, just as we left the tar on the SA side.

"This is just the gravel road that leads to the pass," I said in the hope of freaking him out a bit. He was scheduled to take the wheel for the pass portion of the trip, as I wanted to make things as difficult as possible for the Subaru.

It has an "X-mode" driving setting, which is supposed to make off-roading as easy as possible for the driver, and the best way to test this is to put a novice behind the wheel and send him on his way. Meanwhile, I would snap some photos.

I had my doubts, because I knew the Subaru would be down on power because of the altitude. A healthy dose of confidence and momentum would be necessary to maintain progress, especially on those last few tight corners.

The car and driver performed brilliantly. There were a few occasions when I thought more momentum was needed, but that X-mode made a mockery of the pass. The Subaru

would slow down to crawling pace, after which you could hear the mechanicals working underneath to find traction. At this point the driver needed only to feed the power in slowly and the Outback would leap forward again. It's a brilliant piece of kit and a perfect example of how technology should be used to make adventures like these more accessible to people who aren't used to off-road driving.

The last few corners were sorted within a few minutes and we were quite surprised to find a tarmac road just as you exit Sani Pass. The bulldozers are parked and ready to tar the pass. Some of the romance will be lost, but at least it means everyone will now be able to enjoy the views from the top.

Our plan was to camp at the Sani Top Lodge, but the weather changed our minds. As we sat there enjoying a hot beverage, we noticed the tops of a few damp boulders freezing over. We were prepared for cold, but freezing was out of the question. A quick glance at recent weather patterns revealed that the last snowfall had been only the week earlier, so we climbed back in the car with a new mission – to drive straight through Lesotho and out on the other side, in the Free State.

The trip would be roughly 200km, but I had no idea that 150km of those would be some of the toughest I've ever driven.

The first 50km to Mokhotlong was beautiful. The tarmac was brand new, which made progress easy. It was 10am and we were under the misguided impression that we'd arrive in Clarens at around lunchtime...

LONG TERM OUTING

SUBARU OUTBACK



Above: Rainy weather and narrow roads make for tough driving conditions. The Subaru remained composed throughout the journey.

Left: The Subaru provides wind protection for two men in half-man tents and one man in an actual one-man tent.

Our progress took a turn for the worse as soon as we turned left at the T-crossing outside of Mokhotlong. The road was in decent condition and cars were few and far between. Unfortunately, the locals use the roads for other things, such as transporting cattle or playing games. A top speed of between 40km/h and 70km/h was all we could manage. More than once we rounded a blind corner to find a herder and his sheep filling the road.

The scenery made it all worthwhile, however. It's a tough trip, but driving through the heart of Lesotho is something every adventurer should do at least once in his lifetime.

Even if we'd wanted to drive a bit faster, the car was having none of it. The altitude, which we recorded at 3200m above sea level at one stage, was robbing the car of much of its power, which wasn't ideal as we needed it most over those final few kilometres.

The road just sort of disappeared and we ended up driving on the first stages of a new road.

The Chinese workers had laid down a thick layer of small volcanic-like stones, and this proved a seriously tricky surface to drive on. Not enough speed and we would bog down,

but too much speed on a loose surface is never a good idea.

Luckily, the Outback adapted perfectly to the conditions. I just kept my foot planted and left the job of finding traction to the electronics. The rear end "went light" on a few occasions, but the car reined it in within milliseconds without losing forward momentum.

The last 100km were taxing, to say the least. By the time we arrived at the Caledonspoort border post we were spent. Suddenly camping was not an attractive prospect, but since it had been my idea to begin with, I didn't share this thought with my companions.

The stupid tents we had didn't make the camping any easier. We had bought them under the impression that they were two-man tents, but I'd like to meet the person the manufacturer used to measure this claim.

The initial thought was that taking camping gear along would allow us to test the Subaru's luggage capacity. We packed like varsity students, which is another way of saying we simply threw everything in the back and set off. But for the record, the boot swallowed three tents, four large bags and a host of blankets and pillows. If we'd packed more carefully, I'm sure there would have been enough room for two

additional people and their luggage.

After camp had been set up, and we realised we hadn't brought anything to sit on, we decided to have dinner in Clarens, go to bed early and set off as soon as the sun was up the following day.

At one point during the night, I heard my brother calling my name. "Gerhard, Gerhard."

"Yes," I responded, fairly annoyed about being woken up.

"Do you fit in your tent?" he asked.

The temperature went down to 0°C that night. I considered climbing in the back of the Subaru, as it is actually big enough to house three sleeping men, but as soon as I unzipped my tent, that idea flew right out with the gale force, ice-cold wind that was blowing at the time.

So I spent eight hours in that depressing tent. My feet stuck out and the strong wind blew the tent flat onto my face every few minutes.

Believe it or not, I'd do it all again. It's times like these that make for great stories, I keep telling myself.

The way back

With only 350km of flat road to cover between Clarens and our respective homes, the final day went off without a hitch.

The Subaru was a comfortable and quiet companion. In fact, it's hard to believe it was the same car we basically abused to get us up and over Lesotho. More surprising than that was the lack of any rattles. Cars tend to develop annoying rattles on such journeys, but the fact that the interior was as quiet and rattle free as the day we set off is testament to how solidly Subaru builds its cars.

If I could change one thing, it would be the CVT gearbox. Subaru does a better job than most, but I still prefer an automatic gearbox. I understand that a CVT makes a car more frugal, but the 0,5l/100km saving just isn't enough of a gain, in my humble opinion.

Having said that, the CVT system gets better when you live with it and adapt your driving style. The 2,0-litre turbocharged diesel derivative is better suited to the CVT set-up, so I'd advise anyone thinking about buying an Outback to drive all three derivatives to find out which one suits you best.

When we drove it hard, the Outback responded with a fuel consumption of around 12l/100km, but on the flat plains of the Free State it dropped to 7,5l/100km. That's more than acceptable for such a large car, with full-time all-wheel drive.

And you get all of this at a very reasonable price of R490 000. The Outback certainly isn't perfect, but at the price we can't think of another car that does so many things so well. **LW**

Crossed wires on the Duster

Gerhard Horn reports on the progress of the long-term vehicles in the *Leisure Wheels* stable over the past month

Renault Duster

When we reported that the face-lifted Duster had no traction control override button, we sparked the fury of a thousand Renault owners.

First off, allow me to state that our long-term unit does not have that button, and when I phoned to find out from Renault whether there was this facility in the face-lifted model, I was told by a technician that it was not. The magazine went to print, and a few days later the phone calls started. "You guys must be mistaken. My new Duster has a traction control button and it's located right next to the park distance control button," one owner told us.

Our Duster doesn't have this button, which led us to believe that it might have been one of the first of the series to arrive in SA. It

has traction control, but we have no way of switching it off.

On the plus side, through this incident we have found out how passionate Duster owners are, because we had no idea this little off-roader had built up such a cult following. That's mighty impressive, considering that it has only been around for three years. There's even a Renault Duster Owners' Club. Such clubs are usually the preserve of far more serious off-roaders.

With so many Duster owners phoning us, we had the opportunity to obtain a few first-hand accounts of what ownership is like, and the news was very good.

In our experience, the service levels are exceptional. After Renault investigated this issue, they found that our Duster was the only one without a T/C button and it also

happened to be the first reported case of something like this happening. Our Duster was taken away and replaced with a brand-new one, this time with a T/C button. As this is the first time we've had a problem with our beloved Duster, we're willing to forgive Renault. This car's positive attributes far outweigh this one minor niggle.

SA owners love their Dusters, and we even had a few of them telling us about the modifications they have made and the places they have visited. One was in the process of fitting his Duster with rock sliders.

We love this enthusiasm for the Duster and hope that some of you will share a few photographs of what you've done in your car. Get in touch by sending an e-mail to editorial@leisurewheels.com.



BMW X6 M50d

I've been reading a lot of reports on the BMW X6 M50d and note that a few journalists seem to have a problem with the fact that BMW used its famous "M" badge on a vehicle that's not a fully-fledged "M" model.

I understand why BMW formed the so-called M Performance division, which aims to give people something between the average standard car and the full-bore performance machinery the established M division produces.

The X6M is a powerful machine that could certainly land you in hot water if you don't keep your wits about you. I wonder sometimes where we'll be going to next. If every new generation of car has to have more power, where are we going to end up in ten years? By then the X6M will probably have 550kW, and to me that's just too much.

The X6 M50d strikes a nice balance between aggression and everyday usability. I say nice, because I believe there's an even better solution in the shape of the X6 40d. At R1 098 912 it's nearly R300 000 cheaper than the 50d, but its 230kW/630Nm power output is nearly as much as the M50d's. The sprint to 100km/h is less than a second off the pace of the 50d.

At the end of the day, however, that M badge is undeniably alluring and that's what this car is all about – having nearly as much performance as the manic X6M, but without the constant speeding fines and fuel stops! **LW**



#Consumption

It started as an early morning ponder, but soon progressed to a more tangible quest: could a VW Amarok 2.0BiTDI 4Motion D/C get from Johannesburg to Cape Town on just one 80-litre tank of diesel? Now that sounded like a challenge!

Text and photographs: Danie Botha

So there I was, on my way to a press event, in a Volkswagen Amarok 2.0BiTDI 4Motion double cab bakkie. It had been an unusual drive in peak-hour traffic. There had been no broken traffic lights along the route and there were no accidents or bottle necks. This meant I would arrive at the venue about 30 minutes early.

So, cruising on the mostly deserted B-road, I slowed down to 90km/h. Shortly afterwards I noticed a peculiar thing happening to the trip computer's average fuel consumption reading: It started at 9,1 litres/100km. It dropped to 8,5 litres/100km. Then it dropped further to 8,1 litres/100km. And when I stopped at the venue, the average consumption read: 7,4 litres/100km.

This caused me to pull out a calculator, and crunch some numbers. At that consumption, if it was reasonably accurate, I could reach about 1081km on a tank of fuel. With a few additions and fuel economy tricks added to the deal... well, 1400km didn't seem like a pipe-dream at all.

And so began a two-month period of experimentation.

We used 10ppm and 50ppm diesel, and

employed various driving styles and speeds.

Aerodynamics is vital for good economy. The fact is that the Amarok is big and bulky, and in stock form it may fare well in the bakkie class, but overall it is a no aerodynamic fairy.

So we added a Tonneau King hardcover for the open bak. The company claims a 10% reduction in fuel consumption with this cover fitted. Because the Amarok's tailgate can lock, this cover is also far more secure than traditional tonneau covers.

Tyre pressures play a vital role, too, and we tested consumption at the normal 2 bar, at 2,5 bar and all the way to the 17-inch Continental tyres' maximum of 3,5 bar.

As the numbers came down we realised that, with a little bit of luck from Mother Nature, we just might make that 1400km if we kept the average speed below 100. That said, we didn't want to spend two days driving to Cape Town either, so our minimum average speed would be 90km/h.

Since we eventually had to drive back to the Highveld, we also decided, for interest's sake, to simulate a typical Average Joe return journey. We would use the cruise control as

often as possible and set it at a true 120km/h. The tyres would also be inflated to a normal 2 bar. This way we would determine the best possible range on an 80-litre tank as well as an Average Joe range.

Our last test run on a flat and empty highway, a few hours before we departed for Cape Town, resulted in an average consumption of just 4,8 litres/100km!

And so we left Gauteng early on a Sunday morning. Ahead of us lay 1400km of N1 main road, which would include road works and what seemed like hundreds of trucks.

With the tank almost filled with Sasol's 10ppm diesel, which is unfortunately not available everywhere, we topped the tank up with 50ppm diesel and headed south on the N1.

During testing the trip computer had proven quite accurate, so we kept a constant eye on the numbers. At one stage the "range" said 1200km... but for the first time the Free State seemed extremely hilly, as we had to burn more fuel to scale the climbs at a reasonable speed. Big trucks became our best allies. We'd sit in the slipstream of a truck for a few kilometres until there was a sufficient

We'd sit in the slipstream of a truck for a few kilometres until there was a sufficient downhill to overtake the truck, burning as little fuel as possible

The Karoo... where the "whatchmacallits" grow about knee high.

mustfall!

downhill to overtake the truck, burning as little fuel as possible.

You can't believe the difference that slipstream makes. Driving up behind a big 14-wheeler, you can immediately feel the slipstream effect as the bakkie picks up speed and you have to lift off the accelerator.

Anyway, the kilometres steadily went by, and soon we were in the Karoo. We had hoped to increase our fuel efficiency here, but Mother Nature had other plans: a light headwind meant we had to use more throttle to keep up our average speed, resulting in more 10ppm being consumed.

By the time we reached Laingsburg, late in the morning, we knew the 1400km game was up. That headwind, which still gusted every now and again, had sealed our fate. Still, we were going to drive the Amarok until it was dry – we carried extra diesel to use when this happened.

The N1 had also put our test run on the quiet Johannesburg highway into perspective. On a

busy road you can't just cruise at an indicated 105km/h. You have to deal with trucks, overtaking, oncoming traffic, constant hills and dales – that 4,8 litres/100km had been achieved under ideal conditions, and the N1 was anything but that.

As we completed the Hex River Pass, the two-litre twin-turbo diesel began coughing and spluttering. It was the end game for the run, but we had completed 1237,6km – still an amazing feat for a 4x4 double cab bakkie. Our final consumption figure, by the way, was 6,4 litres/100km.

The next day, on the way back to Johannesburg – with the tyres returned to a much more comfortable 2 bar and the cruising speed set at a true 120km/h – the Amarok needed an average of 9,6 litres/100km, so it could still reach almost 900km on a tank.

So is the VW Amarok fuel efficient? Indeed, is it the most fuel efficient double cab on the market? You bet it is! We don't think any other turbodiesel



Above: We were "Garmin-ed" to the teeth – a Garmin Dash Cam (available at www.navworld.co.za) records video and GPS location, and a Garmin Montana (right) adds some direction to the game. Below: *That 4x4 Show* presenter Tumelo Maketeketete was impressed by the lack of turbo lag, thanks to two turbos.



RUN 1: 6,4 litres/100km

Fuel used: Sasol 10ppm

Air conditioning: Off

Cruise control: Off

Tyre pressure: 3,5 bar

Average speed: 91km/h

Driving style: Short-shifting, overtake on downhills where possible

RUN 2: 9,6 litres/100km

Fuel used: Sasol 50ppm

Air conditioning: On

Cruise control: On, where possible

Tyre pressure: 2 bar

Average speed: 108 km/h

Driving style: Normal



ECONOMY DRIVE

VW AMAROK IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

double cab 4x4 would be able to top that 1237km distance on one 80-litre tank.

Or is there? Please let us know what range you get in your double cab. And share some of your fuel saving tips. Times are tough, so every penny saved is a penny in the bank! Send your feedback to editorial@leisurewheels.com.

Emissions scandal? Get over it already!

The idea for this Amarok economy run was born before the Volkswagen emissions cheating story broke in the US. In fact, we had been testing the Amarok for about a month before the proverbial pawpaw hit the fan. So, with VW taking a knock around every corner, should we forget about our economy run? Or should we go ahead regardless, and take things as they come? We went for the latter option.

Although what happened in the US (and apparently in some European countries) was obviously wrong and detrimental to the brand, the emissions scandal does not appear to have anything to do with SA.

It is also important to consider the big difference in emissions legislation between SA and the US.

The Euro emissions standard business came about in 1992 when legislation required manufacturers to fit catalytic converters to new petrol engines to limit the emission of harmful carbon monoxide gases. By 1996, Euro 2 legislation was introduced. This entailed further limits to emissions and also reduced the limit of unburned hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen in both petrol and diesel vehicles.

In diesel engines, this meant the following limits applied: CO₂ of 1,0 g/km; HC + NO_x of 0,7 g/km, and PM of 0,08 g/km.

Here's the punchline: SA still operates on the Euro 2 legislation, introduced in 1996, so any modern diesel engine in SA complies with this level of legislation.

In the US it is a different matter. The whole debacle revolves around VW's EA189 Euro 5 standard diesel engines, which are supposed to comply with the US legislation. Euro 5 is much stricter than Euro 2, and all new diesel cars from 2013 onwards had to comply with

VW Amarok 2.0BiTDI 4Motion D/C

Engine: 1968cc four-cylinder diesel, twin turbos

Power: 132 kW @ 4000r/min

Torque: 400Nm @ 1500r/min

Gearbox: Six-speed manual

4x4 system: Part-time, with low range, rear diff lock

Electronic driving aids: Off-road ABS, traction and stability control

Price: R517 500



Top: Cruising at a true 120km/h, with the climate control activated... and recording 9,6 litres/100km. Above: Two days before the journey the Amarok was serviced at the McCarthy VW Constantia branch. This included a headlight adjustment. Main: With rock-hard tyres and driving as economically as possible, the Amarok 2.0BiTDI 4Motion reached 1237km on an 80-litre tank. That's 6,4 litres/100km!

a limit on particle numbers in addition to the particle weight limits. It is like comparing Pollsmoor Prison with a fenced-off play area at the local crèche.

What happened in America is serious, yes. It's not like a fight between spouses over the DSTv remote control. No sirree, it's very much like one spouse had cheated on the other, and the couple now have to work through this unpleasant situation. In the States, VW resale value, brand loyalty and actual sales will suffer as a result.


But that is in the US. This is SA, where a Chinese bakkie powered by a 20-year-old diesel

engine passes the Euro 2 level legislation.

The local VW lads can now decide how many models they want. Apparently they are selling all the models they are bringing in.

Furthermore, as South Africans we have to deal with much worse than a made-in-America scandal.

Inept governance, failing infrastructure, corruption, an ailing economy, escalating crime, water shortages... and some people still want to judge an entire company on the actions of errant staff who got fancy with their emissions technology?

Get over it already! 

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 - * internal storage bags



Time for a proper Rodeo



When your car starts getting a bit old, you have two options. You can either trade it in for a song, or like Neil Dormehl (left), use it as a base for a brilliant once-off creation

Text and photography: DriveLine Media



You probably know the feeling. It begins with doubt, and quickly escalates into a nagging feeling that something must be done. The time has come to trade in your 4x4.

But a few things are stopping you.

1. At R500 000 or more, a new 4x4 is too expensive to justify.
2. The trade-in value on your current, perfectly good vehicle is ridiculously low, and
3. You still love your car!

It was no different for Neil Dormehl, who had enjoyed his 3.0-litre V6 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo for 15 years. During that time, the vehicle had never skipped a beat, despite travelling frequently between Cape Town and Johannesburg, heading out on holidays, and occasionally working as a business runaround bakkie.

When the time came to sell, Neil was offered a dismal price for the Colt and couldn't bring himself to let it go. So, instead, he went "cowboy"...

As the owner of Brandco, a vehicle wrapping business, Neil decided to transform the Colt into an eye-grabbing marketing tool.

After shopping around at various 4x4 fitment companies which were all offering the same sort of thing – bumper, bull-bar, snorkel and lift kit – Neil finally came across the Arctic Truck name, and from then on he knew exactly what he wanted: 35 inches of unmistakable road presence.

He had the Colt shipped up from Cape Town to the 4WD Truckin' Company head office in Pretoria, and it wasn't long before designs were drawn up and new custom-made wheel arches had been shaped and formed.

The Colt has always been a popular and well-respected bakkie in SA. Typically, most owners manage to squeeze 32-inch tyres onto the Colt, usually by cranking up the suspension and fitting body spacers. However, the result is often a top-heavy vehicle with a high centre of gravity, comparatively narrow track width and poor ride quality.

The guys at 4WD Truckin' knew that getting 35-inch tyres to fit the Colt was going to be nearly impossible, especially as they prefer not to interfere with the vehicle's suspension geometry. Which is why, as in most of their conversions, they focused on body and chassis modifications rather than altering the Colt's suspension set-up.

The big challenge with the Colt is its lack of trimable steel, especially between the vehicle's front fenders and doors, so a lot of the custom work involved manufacturing the right plates and struts to maintain the vehicle's structural strength. Alignment changes were also made, and once the arches had been fitted, smoothly integrated and finally colour-coded, 4WD Truckin' completed the vehicle with a set of



You've no doubt seen dozens of Jeep Wranglers with oversized tyres, but as far as we know, this may very well be the only Colt in South Africa running on 35s.



Specification list

Extensive body and chassis modifications
Custom 4WDTC fender flares
Custom 4WDTC rims with extra offset
Hella Luminator Compact LEDs
Ironman Suspension
35-inch Cooper STT mud-terrains
Custom mud flaps


Cooper STT mud-terrains.

The Colt was then wrapped by the experts at Brandco and 4WD Truckin', who also laser cut the mud flaps that showcased the company name.

The end result was far better than everyone had expected. The 4WD Truckin's Facebook page went viral after images of the Colt were posted. More importantly, Brandco got what it was looking for, and its marketing strategy in building a one-of-a-kind promotion vehicle worked out well.

The screen printing and car-wrapping business is a highly competitive one, and while the rest of its players were using standard bakkies and vans to promote their services, Brandco shook things up by doing things a little differently. Needless to say, the move is paying off.

The same formula could be applied by most businesses. So, if you are in the market for a head-turning company car, give the 4WD Truckin' Company a call at 012-803-1040, or 011-791-3822, or visit www.4wdtruckin.co.za.

As they say, "Bigger isn't always better... just most of the time." 



World wheels



Infiniti enters premium crossover segment

The Infiniti QX30 premium active crossover was launched simultaneously at the 2015 Los Angeles and Guangzhou international motor shows. Alongside the Q30, revealed in September 2015, the QX30 is part of Infiniti's new premium compact model line-up.

The manufacturer waxes lyrically about the design, both interior and exterior, and we agree that the car makes a bold visual statement – not dissimilar to the Volvo V60 Cross Country that we tested this month. The QX30 offers an elevated ride height over the Q30, and an intelligent all-wheel drive system. The drivetrain is able to send up to 50% of power and torque to the rear axle, to maintain traction.

The Infiniti QX30 will be available in both petrol and diesel versions and will go on sale in selected markets, including SA, in the middle of 2016.

Jeep builds two special editions

Jeep unveiled two special editions at the Los Angeles Auto Show. The sleek 2016 Grand Cherokee SRT Night has 20-inch 5Ten-style wheels and is powered by a 6.4-litre HEMI V8 engine that develops 354 kW and 636Nm of torque. This massive engine can get the car from 0-96km/h in 4.8 seconds and hit a top speed of 257 km/h.

Also unveiled was the Jeep Wrangler Backcountry – an off-road version of the Wrangler Sahara. It features high-strength steel bumpers front and rear and Rubicon-style, 17-inch wheels with BF Goodrich's new All-Terrain T/A KO2 tyres.

The engine is the 3.6-litre Pentastar V6 that produces 212kW and 352Nm of torque.

This particular Wrangler features a host of other niceties, including 17-inch wheels with BF Goodrich's new All-Terrain T/A KO2 tyres, high-strength steel bumpers front and rear, and Rubicon-style rock sliders



Nissan's Triple Nickel to break records

A pick-up truck or bakkie cannot be compared in any way to the likes of land speed hungry vehicles such as the Bloodhound SSC. Nonetheless, Nissan North America wants the Titan XD Triple Nickel to set new speed times, and is confident it can beat records in its class. The current marks in the two classes in which the Titan will compete are 307km/h in the D/DT Class and 185km/h in the FIA Class A-III-9.

This Titan XD has a Cummings 5.0-litre V8 turbo diesel engine and gained the nickname, Triple Nickel, because of its 752Nm torque output. The build process started quite recently and at this point the "race truck" features a specially lowered suspension, a ground-hugging front air dam, bed cover, disc wheel covers, no side mirrors, a safety parachute and a custom-built roll cage.

Tonka Toy for adults

Toyota has teamed up with the Funrise Toy company to create a once-off life-size 4Runner Tonka Toy.

The exterior modifications are extensive and include new bumpers, front and rear, with underbody protection plates, side steps, roof rack and a rooftop tent.

It has obviously been lifted by a good few centimetres, probably to make room for the 20-inch alloys and 38-inch tyres.

The vehicle is powered by a 4,0-litre V6 engine that produces 200kW and 370Nm of torque. Unfortunately, only one will be built and there are no plans to put it into even limited production.





Fiat's Fullback for SA

Fiat revealed its new Fullback double cab at the Dubai Motor Show. This handsome new bakkie is set to rival the Toyota Hilux, VW Amarok and Mitsubishi Triton.

If you have a sense of déjà vu when looking at the Fullback, it's because it is basically the same as the Mitsubishi Triton, with the big difference (on the outside at least) being the Fiat badge on the front of the car.

The Fullback will be able to carry 1045kg and will be equipped with a 2.4-litre turbocharged diesel engine with either 112kW or 134kW outputs. A five-speed automatic or six-speed manual transmission will be available.

Off-road enthusiasts will be happy to learn that there will be a model with full-time four-wheel drive, but a cheaper two-wheel drive version will also be offered. The Fullback is due to arrive in SA in the third quarter of 2016.

Evoque goes topless

Land Rover has unveiled the Range Rover Evoque Convertible, described as the "world's first luxury compact SUV convertible".

There's no doubt that this vehicle is eye-catching, with fluid lines that exude elegance, but how capable is it off road? We'll let you know when we get to test one, though it's not due in SA until the middle of 2016.

The Evoque Convertible's four-wheel drive powertrain combines with Land Rover's nine-speed automatic transmission, Terrain Response system and optional All-Terrain Progress Control and Wade Sensing, ensuring that it will be as capable as the hard-top version.

The car offers 251 litres of boot space that is not affected by the fabric roof, claimed to be the longest and widest on any current vehicle. It stows away in just 18 seconds.



Bentley launches Bentayga First Edition

Bentley unveiled the new Bentayga First Edition at a VIP event ahead of the Los Angeles Auto Show. These First Edition models are issued to the first customers to place their orders. Each is fitted with unique trim and comes with a choice of one of three timepieces crafted by Breitling. Only 608 units will be made.

The Bentley Bentayga First Edition features Union Jack badging, 22-inch two-tone wheels and illuminated treadplates.

Inside, there is "diamond quilted leather", embroidered seats, contrast stitching and ambient lighting. There will be ten exterior colours to choose from.

The Bentayga's 6.0-litre twin-turbo W12 engine produces 447kW. That's enough to power the luxury off-roader to 100km/h in about four seconds and on to a top-speed of 301km/h. Bentley says this makes it the fastest and most powerful SUV on the market.

New Navara already winning awards

The all-new Nissan NP300 Navara has won the coveted European 2016 International Pick-up of the Year award at a ceremony in Lyon, France.

Nissan's pick-up, already launched in several global markets, fought off stiff competition, with judges praising its on-road and off-road capabilities, strong engine performance and payload capacity.

The vehicle underwent a rigorous testing process, being judged for its off-road ability, on-road performance and value for money. It was also tested on its ability as a workhorse, which included towing capabilities.

"Nissan is best known by its customers in Europe as the maker of capable 4x4s and breakthrough crossovers," said Ponz Pandikuthira, director of light commercial vehicles for Nissan Europe. "This new Navara represents the fusion of those two realms of excellence, delivering a breakthrough pick-up truck that combines rugged 4x4 toughness with the sophistication and efficiency of a crossover."



For daily 4x4 and SUV news updates, be sure to visit www.leisurewheels.co.za

A ride on the wild side!

Photography: Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson
Text: Danie Botha

The convoy consisting of nine double-cabs waiting for their turn to drive down another slip face in the Namib.



Heat, sand, the *ooswind*, a seal colony, the Namib dunes, the wild Atlantic – and a group of adventurers in double cab bakkies including a good helping of off-road novices. This is the story of the 2015 *Leisure Wheels* Adventure Safari in one of the most awesome, desolate places on earth

The *ooswind* apparently blows about 22 times a year. And here we are, arriving at the Walvis Bay airport from the desert on one of those days.

The conditions are unpleasant, to say the least. With the east wind whipping up a constant sand storm, visibility is poor as the 13-vehicle convoy pulls in.

Amazingly, the locals reckon the wind has calmed down in recent years. In its hey-day it would apparently sand blast anything in its way. Like in take the paint clean off.

We park the bakkies in the airport's new parking area, and extract ourselves from the scene as speedily as possible.

It's a rather unexpected way to end the

trip through some of Namibia's most remote areas. The airport is under construction, so the group of wind-blasted adventurers have to squeeze into a corner of the incomplete building, near a shop that sells basic take-away meals and – more importantly – ice-cold Tafel Lagers.

With a few plates of chips, seasoned with a light helping of building dust, doing the rounds, and with plenty of Tafels to wash them down, the chirping starts.

"At least the *slap* chips are better than your driving," says one comedian.

"Hah!" comes the reply. "But we didn't get all loquacious on the two-way radio,

blabbering on and on about obvious things. Like the sand is soft... really? Soft sand in the desert? Who would have thought!"

The laughter echoes through the building site, drowning out the *ooswind* howl.

A group of 25 strangers had, over the past three days, evolved into a band of compatriots and friends.

It all started out ridiculously early at Johannesburg's OR Tambo airport...

Early bird catches the plane

04:40. That's how early the group of 23 industry guests and *Leisure Wheels*

Not that the distance was intimidating – it was just that the track would make for slow going. As our local expert and Uri Adventures tour guide, Eben Delport, put it at the morning briefing, "It's not very far but it's quite a distance."



**Nissan Navara
2.5dCi LE**
Gavin and Lani Rheeder



**GWM Steed 5E LUX
2.0 VGT**
Sean and Kerry Ebersohn



**Ford Ranger 3.2
Wildtrak**
Al and Dealean Chetty



Isuzu KB 300 LX
Lunga Ntsendwana and
Busi Mpahla

YES

**THIS IS THE ONLY TYRE BRAND IN
S.A. WITH WARRANTIED CONVICTION.**

staffers had to report to the Air Namibia counter on a cool Thursday morning. The group of bleary-eyed would-be travellers mumbled their greetings, checked in and made their way to a cafeteria.

The coffee and breakfast did bring an increase in enthusiasm among the guests, who were soon chattering away about vehicle sales, the economy and other such exciting matters.

By 7am the Air Namibia plane was cruising along at 900km/h, winging its way to the Hosea Kutako Airport outside Windhoek, where it touched down after a two-hour flight. The fleet of double cab bakkies was waiting outside.

After a short briefing, the guests loaded

up their vehicles and off they went, in their own time, aiming for the Etotongwe Lodge outside Outjo, where lunch would be served. This town was the last point at which to stock up on snacks, drinks and fuel for the trip.

After lunch we had to cover about 200km to reach the Twyfelfontein Lodge. We soon swapped tar for gravel, with heavy rain clouds looming.

We deflated the tyres to 1,8 bar. Although this was not essential, the slight drop in pressure on gravel makes a big difference in comfort and grip, adding an extra dimension of safety to proceedings.

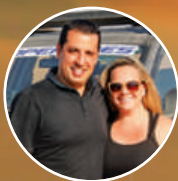
The convoy snaked its way through the rugged Damaraland and we arrived, in

good time, at Twyfelfontein. It had been a long day of travelling almost 2000km, and after settling in the group gathered in the lodge's bar. It was Tafel Lager time!

The road to nowhere?

We had another long day ahead of us. Not that the distance was intimidating – it was just that the track would make for slow going. As our local expert and Uri Adventures tour guide, Eben Delpert, put it at the morning briefing, "It's not very far but it's quite a distance."

The route would take us around the Brandberg Mountain – at 2600m the highest point in Namibia – through dry river beds, over the aptly named Divorce



**Foton Tunland
2.8 LUX**

Pedro and Sherene Pereira

**Toyota Hilux
DC 3.0 D4D**

Kirby and Morné Assam

**VW Amarok
2.0 BiTDI**

Jaco Steenekamp and
Francois Naude

**Mitsubishi Triton
2.5 HP**

Braam and Lianne Faul

**Tata Xenon
XT 2.2**

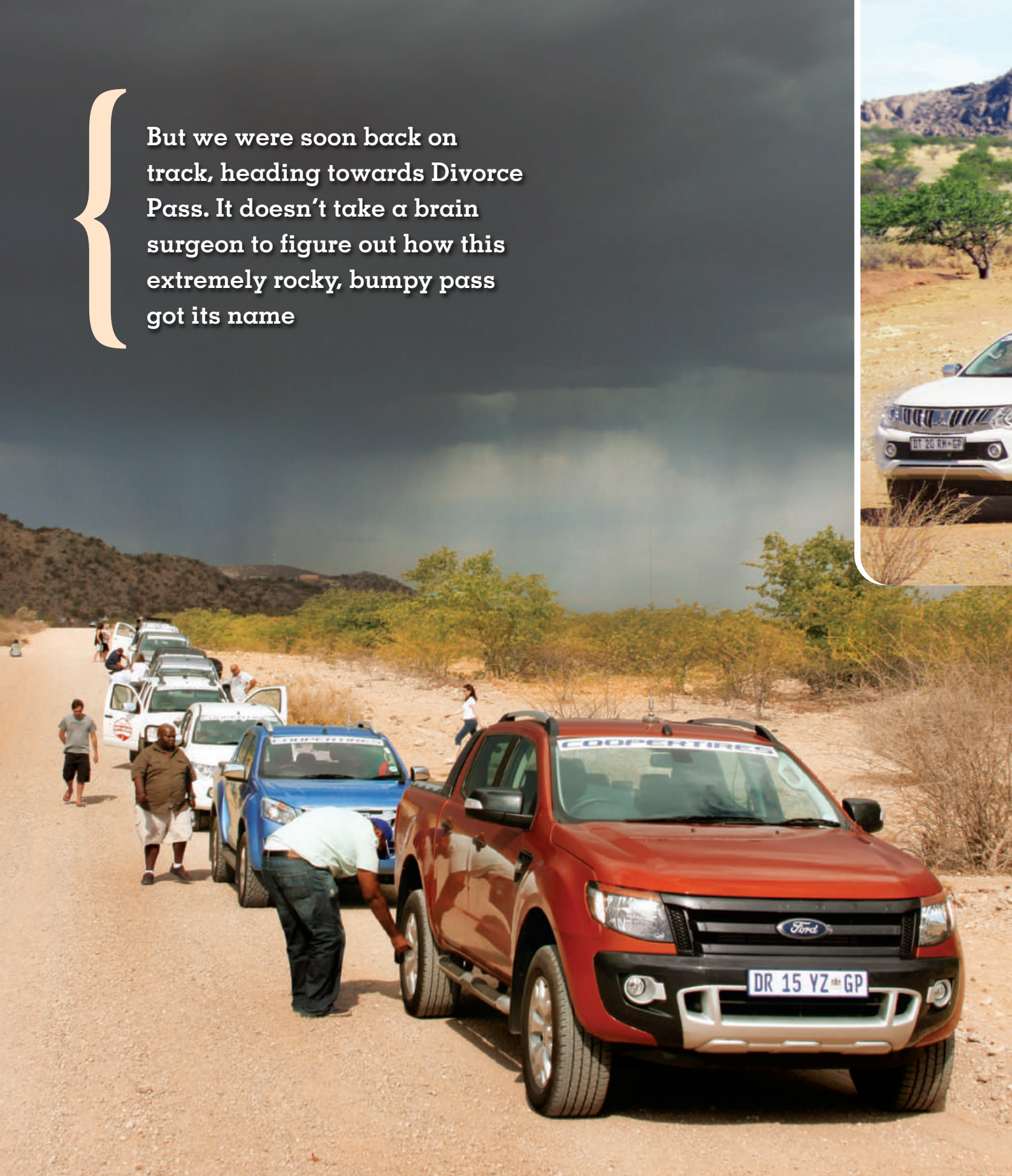
Kyri and Stav Michael

Cooper TyreLife is a free mileage and protection plan you receive when buying any 4 Cooper tyres from a Cooper TyreLife partner. Now that's a brand you can believe in.

Visit www.coopertyres.co.za to find your tyre size.



But we were soon back on track, heading towards Divorce Pass. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out how this extremely rocky, bumpy pass got its name



YES

**COOPER TYRES
ARE FOR EVERYONE**



Left: After turning off the blacktop, it was necessary to lower tyre pressures for the gravel roads ahead. A massive storm lurking in the background meant it had to be done in record time.

Above: The convoy comes to a halt to enjoy the desolate, but beautiful scenery on the way to the first overnight stop at Twyfelfontein.

Pass, along some more dry river beds and finally to Cape Cross Hotel, on the Atlantic Ocean.

We started off with a little 4x4 low range obstacle, near the “burnt mountain”. For several of guests, it was the first time they had driven a 4x4 in low-range in an off-road environment, and you can bet your bottom dollar there were a few frayed nerves at play.

But everyone made it up and the (off-road) ice – as it were – had been broken.

The convoy continued to snake at low speed between the rocky koppies of Damaraland, with Brandberg standing tall in the distance. Soon, though, we headed into the Ugab River, and a new 4x4 challenge.

The river sand was mostly easy to navigate but there were stretches of extremely soft sand that can suck in a 4x4 if the driver is caught unawares, or stops in the wrong spot.

Soon the two-way radio was alive

with requests for help, and there were multiple recoveries going on. One bakkie was badly stuck, having burrowed its way down into the sand, the chassis embedded in the soft stuff. Eben's expertise was needed for this one.

And it was hot, too. Recovering a 4x4 in these conditions brings special challenges. For instance, the sand is baked so hot that it can burn the skin. Yep, the Namibian outback is a tough place.

But we were soon back on track, heading towards Divorce Pass. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out how this extremely rocky, bumpy pass got its name. The slow ride seems to go on forever, traversing rocky sections of varying degrees of difficulty. You are only allowed to drive down the pass. Going up the first, steep section would result in much mayhem, spinning and ultimately, damage to the already



The impressive and serene Twyfelfontein Lodge was definitely worth the long drive on the first day. The guests dined beneath the stars.

Weekend off-roaders, explorers, comfort class customers, classic connoisseurs and those driven by the open road. Cooper tyres is with you from rough to smooth.

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COOPERTYRES
FROM THE ROUGH TO THE SMOOTH



Eben Delpont of Uri Adventures gives the group a quick briefing on Divorce Pass. "It's not far, but it's quite a distance," he famously quipped.



Top: Decent forecourts are few and far between in the region. This is the fuel station at Twyfelfontein.

Above: The first obstacle the group faced in Namibia. Things would get a lot trickier over the next two days.

patchy track.

All the vehicles made it to the lunch stop, back at the Ugab River. Everyone had gone through the pass okay, but the drivers of the lower-slung bakkies told tales of their careful planning to avoid the bigger rocks and boulders.

After lunch we set off for the Rhino community campsite. From there we encountered a horribly corrugated section, but after the rocks and sand, the convoy hardly seemed to notice. By now they were intrepid travellers, taking tough conditions in their stride.

Finally, we reached the coast, and the Atlantic Ocean. The guests visited the Cape Cross seal colony before heading to the nearby hotel.

Namibia's seal colonies are very controversial. Every year thousands of seals are culled in a government programme to keep the numbers down and protect the region's fish stocks. However, conservationists believe the cull has nothing to do with protecting the fish, but rather concerns the commercial harvesting of the products from the culling process, noticeably the fur and meat.

Back at the hotel, the guests settled in. Some chose a cold Jaegermeister, washed down by Tafel Lager. It had been a long, hard day – but a really good one.

Sand blasted!

There was a lazy start in the morning, following a couple of long, tiring days. On the programme was a bit of sight-seeing in Swakopmund. Many of the guests had never been there, so we devoted the morning to shopping and exploring one of Namibia's most popular tourist centres.

At 1pm we met at the big traffic circle in

Walvis Bay. This is where we would link up with the rest of the Uri Adventures crew: Len, Danie (Jakkals) and Johnny. It was time to head for Rooigrond, about 40km from Walvis Bay. And here, on the edges of the vast Namib Desert, the Uri team lay down the sand driving laws.

"The first rule of driving in the Namib sand is: stay in the tracks of the vehicles in front of you," explained Jakkals, the main speaker.

"The second rule, is to stay in the tracks of the vehicle in front of you."

Tyre pressures is another important issue. "You need to run pressures of between 0,8 and 1 bar," he says, greeted with rolling of the eyes by some drivers.

So tyres are deflated to seemingly inappropriately low levels. Stability and traction control systems are switched off. Some nerves are, clearly, frayed.

And so the dune driving odyssey starts, kicking off with some small heaps of sand that can't quite be classified as dunes. And the first 4x4 gets bogged down. The Uri lads jump in, giving advice, checking tyre pressures. Oh dear, the tyres are still inflated to more than 1 bar.

Tyres are deflated to 0,8 bar, and off goes the bakkie.

Another one gets stuck. The Uri crew jumps in. Bakkie gets going again.

Another double cab bogs down. The lads again come to the rescue. Bakkie gets going again.

It looks as though we are in for a long day!

Then, almost disaster. Ignoring Uri's rule one and two about staying in the tracks,

YES

THE DISCOVERER STT PRO
POSSESSES A CERTAIN ARROGANCE

Then, almost disaster.
Ignoring Uri's rule one and
two about staying in the
tracks, the Toyota Hilux flies
over a sharp crest, metres
through the air



The kaniiedood bush.
(*Commiphora wildii*)



Butter tree
(*Tylecodon paniculatus*)



Welwitschia mirabilis



The Divorce Pass seems relatively tame, but the road is littered with sharp rocks that take absolutely zero prisoners. Lose concentration for a second, and you're sure to lose a tyre. With a smattering of local fauna and flora to look at, it is beautiful, in a dried up desert sort of way.

With its enviable 4x4 skills set, it certainly deserves to be exactly that.
Take on any adventure, in any terrain with this 4x4 beast of a tyre.

Visit www.coopertyres.co.za to find your tyre size.



COOPERTIRES
FROM THE ROUGH TO THE SMOOTH



After a few tense hours getting through Divorce Pass, a dried up Ugab River, filled with soft sand, was just what the doctor ordered.

Right. As shade is scarce in this part of the world, an obvious meeting point was the only tree for miles around.



the Toyota Hilux flies over a sharp crest, metres through the air. Thankfully the Hilux survives and is good to go, though the crew are a bit shaken and stirred.

The incident is a timely reminder that following the rules is vital, and non-negotiable for safety reasons.

The teams start performing better.

Up and down we go, and every time we stop and have a chat with some of the other drivers, you can see their confidence is growing. And so, after no more major incidents, we arrive at our overnight camp.

Later, sitting down at the amazing dinner tables, which were transported all the way here, we drink a Jaegermeister toast, and down a few more Tafels. It had been a splendid day indeed.

Ooswind!

It's early on the last morning of the adventure. We have carted along a Phantom drone to take some photographs of the dunes, and this is the moment to do it.

All the checks are done, the camera is set, and up she goes... Ahhhh! The wind has taken hold of the drone and it's off on its own! By sheer luck we manage to pilot it back to our location while the camera keeps snapping away. However, getting the drone safely on the ground in this wind is a serious challenge.

As the Phantom descends a gust grabs hold of it again, and sends it straight towards the bakkies! We shut it down, and the drone makes a perfect emergency landing in the soft sand only about 2m from the nearest bakkie. Phew!

This early morning experience was our first taste of that *ooswind*, but much worse was to come.

After breakfast we head out in convoy, and with most of the drivers now quite at home in the sand, progress is much swifter than on the previous day.

We head towards the infamous Long Drop dune.

This massive dune requires drivers to head down a spectacularly long, 38° slip face. Then, when you are halfway down, guide Eben Delpoit yells over the

YES

**THE DISCOVERER A/T³
IS A VERSATILE PERFORMER**

The Ugab River flows for only a few days a year, but there is water below the surface. It's flanked by beautiful and vast rock formations, formed by volcanic activity millions of years ago.

radio: "Now! Give it everything you've got!"

So the 4x4 hurtles down this slip-face, which seems completely the wrong thing to do. Then it hits the bottom of this hole, getting airborne, and heads up another very steep dune. If you don't keep your foot flat, you don't get up the other side. It's a heck of a thing, especially for the novice drivers!

But by now the wind is howling, blowing sand into every crevice you can think of. So standing around, watching the 4x4s tackle Long Drop, is not a pleasant experience. And the wind just gets worse and worse.

But all the teams tackle Long Drop and only a few don't make it, simply because the drivers didn't quite "give it everything" on the way down the slip-face.

We push along until we get back to the coast. On a better day this would have been a great stop, offering wonderful "photo opportunities". But not today – not in this sand storm.

So we proceed on our way, and head for Walvis Bay airport.

And that's how we ended up in the corner of a half-finished airport building, eating *slap* chips, washed down with a Tafel.

In summary, then...

It had been a great adventure. We had seen some wonderful places, shared some great experiences and almost featured on the television series, *Air Crash Investigations*, with our drone. And now there was sand in places we didn't even know we had!

Maybe the best of all was to witness the transformation of novice 4x4 drivers into self-assured veterans who were no longer intimidated by a mere heap of sand.

You can't put a price on that. But you can have another Tafel Lager! Cheers!



Uri Adventures

The unflappable Eben Delpont of Uri Adventures, along with his wife Marieta, were our expert guides on this trip. For the Namib Desert leg, Eben's highly experienced colleagues Len, Danie (Jakkals) and Johnny joined us.

Uri Adventures hosts a number of Namibia and Angola tours, including the awesome Faces of the Namib desert trip. Have a look at pages 86 and 87 to read more about the tours they offer. Also check out www.uriadventures.com.

Seals – the good, or the bad?

Mention the name, Cape fur seal, and some conservationists and lobbyists will immediately get all uppity. This is because of the annual Namibian "cull" – a controversial process in which 86 000 seals (apparently mostly babies) are culled by contractors, ostensibly to protect the fish stocks (and subsequent impact on the sustainability of human fishing activities).

Cape fur seal males can grow to more than 3m long, and weigh up to 300kg, so you can imagine that such an animal would devour a lot of fish. And considering

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COOPERTIRES
FROM THE ROUGH TO THE SMOOTH



Above: The obligatory photographs and "selfies" at one of the many shipwrecks on the Skeleton Coast. Right: Our support vehicle of choice for 2015 – the Chevrolet Trailblazer.



the thousands of seals on Namibia's coast, the number of fish required to sustain the colonies must be vast. However, on the other side of the coin, conservation groups and activists have long campaigned against the cull, saying there is no clear evidence that the seals' impact on the fish supply warrants the culling of 86 000 seals every year. They suggest that it's the baby seals' fur and hide that are the real (commercial) reason behind the killings.

Most Namibians seem to agree that the cull is essential, and that it is actually less cruel than allowing nature to take its toll. Over-population is a real threat, and when nature intervenes it makes a man with a club seem rather humane, they say.

Blazer-ing through the Namib

We needed a capable and powerful 4x4 to transport the *Leisure Wheels* crew in and around the convoy of double cab bakkies. This year our SUV of choice was a Chevrolet Trailblazer 2.8LTZ 4x4 Limited AT.

The 'Blazer is based on the Isuzu KB's



chassis and features the same part-time 4x4 drivetrain (with transfer case). It does not have a rear differential lock, but it does have plenty of horsepower. The 2,8-litre four-cylinder engine delivers 144 kW at 3600r/min and 500 Nm of torque at 2000r/min. The drive is transferred via a six-speed automatic gearbox with a manual selection function.

However, in the dunes an automatic gearbox can be a huge asset – or your downfall. When the gearbox does not gear down at the right moment, or if it doesn't respond to manual overrides when needed, you'll get bogged down more often than not, especially in the Namib with its high, soft dunes.

The good news is that, in manual mode, the Chev's gearbox works a treat. So when you need to get the engine revs up when you start losing momentum on a climb, and you gear down, the gearbox gears down. Throw in all the horses and torque, and with a



Top: The stinky but friendly inhabitants of the seal colony at Cape Cross. A lot of Jägermeister was consumed.

Above: The Cape Cross Hotel is a piece of heaven in the middle of nowhere, and a must-see if you are in the vicinity.

YES

THE DISCOVERER ST MAXX
IS STUBBORN

The wind has taken hold of the drone and it's off on its own! By sheer luck we manage to pilot it back to our location while the camera keeps snapping away. However, getting the drone safely on the ground in this wind is a serious challenge

Camping in the desert, *Leisure Wheels* style. Each tent was equipped with a table, comfortable double bed, hot water shower, hand basin and electricity. Who said camping in the desert was tough?

Its ability to tackle and thrive in South Africa's harshest conditions means it refuses to take no for an answer. So be prepared to go anywhere with this tough 4x4 tyre.

Visit www.coopertyres.co.za to find your tyre size.




COOPERTIRES
FROM THE ROUGH TO THE SMOOTH



Above: View from the dining room.

Inset: A Namib sand gecko.

Left and below: A grand marquee tent and a meal fit for a king were ready for the guests. The guests enjoyed the five-star treatment in the middle of the Namib.



stability and traction control system that can be completely shut off, you end up with a very capable 4x4.

We left the transfer case mostly in high range, and used first, second and third gears in the dunes. Only for the really tricky, lower-speed climbs did we select low range.

The Chevrolet Trailblazer retails for R575 500, which includes a five-year/90 000km service plan.

More information:
www.chevrolet.co.za.

Namibia – land of extremes

Some say that, when earth was created, all the left-over rocks and unwanted parts were dumped in the place today known as Namibia. Here are some interesting facts about this beautiful but tough place.

- Namibia has the second-lowest population density in the world, after

Mongolia.

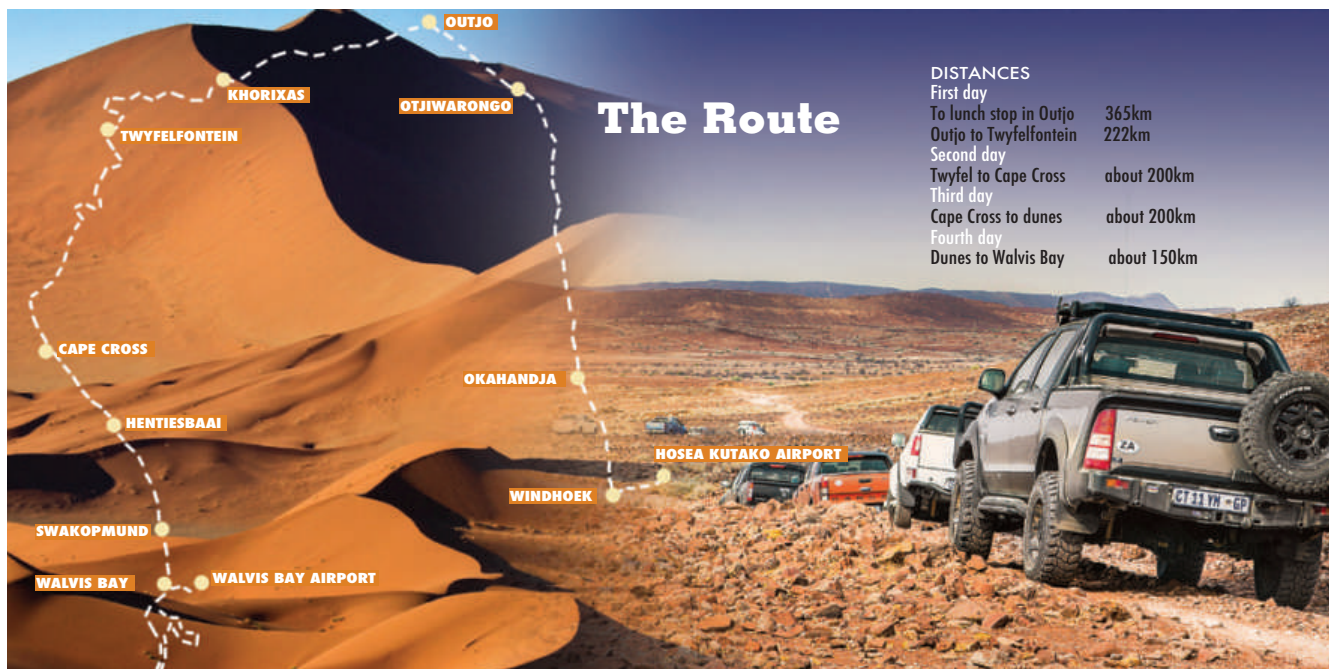
- The majority of the Namibian people are of Ovambo ethnicity – perhaps half.
- Other indigenous groups include Herero, Himba and Khoisan. The latter are considered the original inhabitants of southern Africa.
- Europeans from Germany and Portugal also settled here.
- A 2011 census established that Namibia has 2 113 077 inhabitants. That's fewer people than live in Johannesburg.



- The name Namib is of Nama origin and means vast.
- The Namib desert is said to have been around for at least 55 million years. It is considered the world's oldest desert.
- The Namib has less than 10mm of rain a year.
- Some sand dunes are higher than 300m.
- The temperature in the desert varies from zero to 50°C.

YES

**THIS IS THE ONLY TYRE BRAND IN
S.A. WITH WARRANTIED CONVICTION.**



DISTANCES

First day	
To lunch stop in Outjo	365km
Outjo to Twyfelfontein	222km
Second day	
Twyfelfontein to Cape Cross	about 200km
Third day	
Cape Cross to dunes	about 200km
Fourth day	
Dunes to Walvis Bay	about 150km

A tyre fit for the job

As a bonus, Cooper SA offered each car a brand-new set of rubber from their 4x4 range, which comprises the Discoverer A/T3, Discoverer S/T Maxx, Discoverer STT and Discoverer STT Pro.

Each tyre has its own type of tread and purpose-built design, but they all have one thing in common – they are tough as nails, which is great when your route includes Divorce Pass. This pass has claimed many a tyre, strewn as it is with sharp rocks. Take your eyes off the road for a second and you could soon hear the faint hissing sound of a punctured tyre.

We drove into the pass fearing the worst, but thankfully we arrived at the exit without losing an inch of rubber.

The latest offering in the Cooper range is the STT Pro, which was fitted to the no-nonsense Foton Tunland project vehicle from 2014.

Drivers who fit these tyres for their off-road ventures will not sacrifice anything in the quality of their everyday commuting. This is because the Discoverer STT Pro is equipped with a new silica-infused tread compound that improves wet traction in day-to-day traffic. The

tyre also has lower rolling resistance for improved fuel consumption.

“As part of Cooper’s leading Discoverer tyre line, the STT Pro delivers exceptional traction and performance in the harshest terrains,” said Peter McNally, general manager of Cooper Tyre’s European technical centre product management.

“The STT Pro is an aggressive, high-performance tyre that will

thrill off-road adventurers with its impressive traction in the thickest mud, across rocky terrain and in all types of challenging conditions. Yet it delivers a smooth, reliable ride on the road, making it an outstanding tyre for those who enjoy off-road adventures but need to use the same tyre for their normal motoring.”

To prove that their product is beyond tough, Cooper sponsors two well-known figures in the off-road fraternity.

The first is Xavier Foj, a Spaniard who has competed in the Dakar Rally 25 times. He started using standard Cooper tyres on his Dakar vehicle a few years ago and finished second in his class in 2015.

If these tyres are good enough to compete in the Dakar, the chances are they are good enough to survive Namibia!

Cooper’s second brand ambassador is none other than adventurer Kingsley Holgate. Cooper tyres have got him through rough and smooth in every African country. This reliability and tenacity is essential for him to perform his good work. In Kingsley’s words, “Cooper tyres not only get me there – they get me back!”



Cooper TyreLife is a free mileage and protection plan you receive when buying any 4 Cooper tyres from a Cooper TyreLife partner. Now that’s a brand you can believe in.

Visit www.coopertyres.co.za to find your tyre size.



COOPERTIRES
FROM THE ROUGH TO THE SMOOTH

Former model, still champion

The new facelifted Ranger recently arrived in SA, but we think the pre-facelift model still offers a respectable blend of luxury and off-road ability

Text: Gerhard Horn

Photography: Jannie Herbst
and Tyson Jopson



The first thing you'll notice is that this vehicle is not the recently facelifted Ford Ranger, but the pre-facelift unit. There are two very good reasons for this. The new model is selling so well that Ford couldn't get their hands on one for this trip. And we think the pre-facelift model, which is still available at certain dealers at a hefty discount, is a solid buy.

The facelifted model is certainly a step up with its new engine mounts, interior upgrades and electronically assisted steering, but since the pre-facelift Ranger was such a good car, we have no problem in recommending it.

All the main drawbacks in the new model were very much present in the earlier version, and the most important of these is the 3,2-litre five-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine. It produces more power than any other car in the convoy – 147kW and a massive 470Nm of torque. It is the bakkie GTI.

And the good news is that it is as capable at off-roading as it is in the luxurious daily drive. It has a double-wishbone suspension at the front and leaf springs at the rear. An electronic shift-on-the-fly system is standard, as is a locking rear differential. Throw in a six-speed automatic transmission and you have a bakkie you just have to point where you want to go.

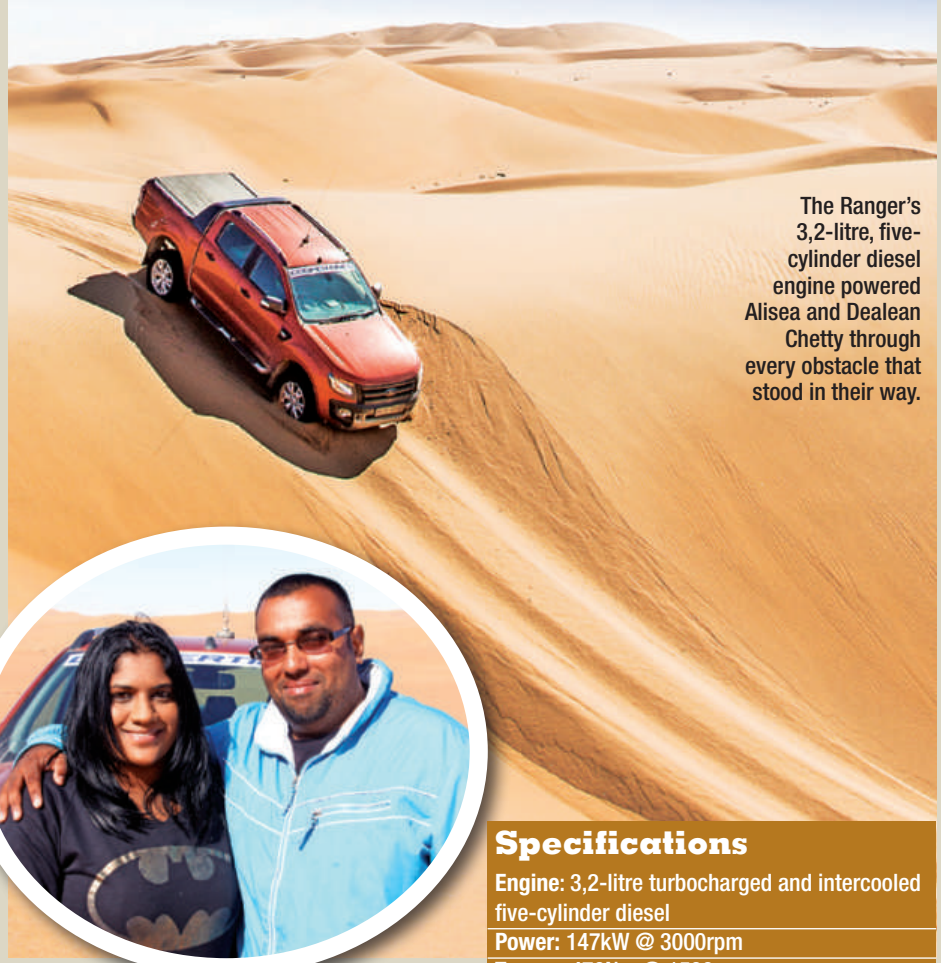
With that much power, you need a few nannies to rein you in, and the Ranger is well catered for in this department. It has ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution, ESP and DSC. Throw in the airbags, and it's no wonder this was the first bakkie to score five stars for safety from Euro NCAP.

The Ranger's specifications make for fantastic reading. It has a wading depth of 800mm and a ground clearance of 237mm, even when it's fully loaded. In addition to the safety electronics, Ford included a number of off-road tricks to help you on your way, such as Hill Descent Control, Hill Launch Assist, Traction Control and Roll-over Mitigation.

But the biggest feather in this bakkie's cap is the comfort level. When it was first introduced in 2012, Ford became the first manufacturer to produce a bakkie with car-like comfort. Name it and the Ford has it – Bluetooth connectivity with voice control, automatic lights, automatic window washers, cruise control, dual-zone climate control and leather seats. Get a Wildtrak and you have a vehicle that other road users will immediately notice and envy.

The only thing standing in its way is a lack of manoeuvrability. It's a massive chunk of bakkie and it has a fairly large turning circle – not ideal for trail driving. Luckily, the wide-open plains of Namibia and its dunes suited the Ranger.

It's also worth stating that a new facelifted Ranger in Wildtrak double-cab 4x4 specification costs nearly R600 000. A pre-facelift Ranger retails for R558 900, and



The Ranger's 3,2-litre, five-cylinder diesel engine powered Alisea and Dealean Chetty through every obstacle that stood in their way.

Done and very well dusted! Namibia has delivered its very best – from fantastic driving roads and challenging 4x4 trails. The desert wildlife, spectacular scenery, untouched beaches, miles of sand driving and shipwrecks are some of the attractions we experienced in the Namib. I am pleased to say I experienced it all in the Ford Ranger Wildtrak, an exhilarating upper-class vehicle that was able to tame the desert sands! Thank you Leisure Wheels for the great African adventure.

we reckon you could talk the salesperson into bringing that down even more.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: US.

History: The Ranger name was first used for a bakkie in 1965, on the Ford F-Series pick-up truck. It would later be used on medium-sized trucks internationally, and that's where the Ranger nomenclature we know comes from.

Interestingly, the Ford Ranger used to be a re-badged version of Mazda's B-Series, but the current Ranger was designed and

Specifications

Engine: 3,2-litre turbocharged and intercooled five-cylinder diesel

Power: 147kW @ 3000rpm

Torque: 470Nm @ 1500rpm

Gearbox: Six-speed automatic

4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H and 4H

4x4 driving aids: Rear differential lock, Traction Control, Hill Descent Control and Hill Start Assist.

Claimed ground clearance: 237mm

Approach angle: 25,5 degrees

Departure angle: 21.8 degrees

Breakover angle: 18,5 degrees

Wading depth: 800mm

Price: R558 900

Service/maintenance plan: Five years/90 000km

Service intervals: 15 000km

engineered by Ford, with Mazda now offering the re-badged version.

Replacement due: The facelifted model is now on sale, but a full replacement isn't due for a few years.

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 1730.

In summary

Good: An epic car to live with day to day and just as good when the going gets tough.

Eish: Turning circle is large and it can be thirsty when driven hard.

Overall verdict: It remains one of the best bakkies we've had the pleasure of driving. The facelifted model is better, but the pre-facelift model is nearly as good and better value for money. **LW**

Larger than life

With its eye-catching styling and proven 2,8-litre Cummins engine, the Foton Tunland has made giant strides on the South African market

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



Some readers may recognise this specific Tunland. It's near and dear to the hearts of *Leisure Wheels* staffers, because it used to be one of our project vehicles. We were sad to see it go, and happy to meet up with it again in Namibia.

Obviously, this particular vehicle is nowhere near standard, but the most vital of component – the engine – remained untouched.

The Foton Tunland was the first light commercial vehicle to be fitted with a Cummins engine and its 120kW and 360Nm output is not to be scoffed at. It slots in nicely with the power offered by its mainstream rivals.

The engine does a perfectly adequate job of powering the standard bakkie around, and it was equally adept at driving the Tunland when we started adding some weight to it. And add weight we did!

This specific bakkie rides on a full replacement suspension kit, including new shocks, coils and rear leaf springs. The modifications also included a custom-built front bumper, rear bumper, roof rack, rock sliders and American Racing XD Series rims shod with serious Cooper rubber.

We think it looks epic, but then again, we are a bit biased since it used to be “ours”.

Underneath, the Foton uses a Dana axle with a limited slip differential. We were a bit worried about this, but luckily the vehicle was expertly piloted by Pedro Pereira and it made it through absolutely everything without a hitch. Only one other bakkie in this company managed to do the same, and it costs R135 000 more than the Tunland. Even with all the additional equipment, the Tunland is significantly cheaper than the cars offered by VW, Ford and Toyota.

It's a lovely car to drive day-to-day, with all that torque available from a low 1800rpm and a host of comfort and convenience features included as standard. It seemed to be at home in the dunes with its massive rubber and drastically increased ground clearance. There were quite a few occasions when we felt jealous of Pedro, who seemed to be having the time of his life.

The standard car was always a pukka off-roader. We were there when it conquered Baboon's Pass and we took it trail driving several times when it was one of our long-term vehicles. It's a fairly large bakkie, but this equates to a spacious interior and large load bin with a 950kg payload rating.

There isn't much in the way of driver aids, apart from the usual safety features such as ABS and EBD. It's all up to the driver, the Getrag six-speed manual gearbox, Borg Warner

Pedro and Sherene Pereira definitely had the most striking car on the safari. To prove it wasn't just a pretty face, the Foton made it through everything without getting stuck once.



“Driving in the desert and arriving at the camp that was already set-up was definitely the highlight! There are not many places in the world where you drive on a road between massive dunes and the sea.”

transfer case and the four-wheel drive system.

Low range is also available, but you only need it when things get seriously tricky. For the most part, it has a tough drivetrain that can take a few knocks.

As standard, the Tunland comes with a radio/CD player with AUX and USB inputs, Bluetooth connectivity, air conditioning and leather seats.

The Tunland represents the closest that a Chinese manufacturer has come to offering the refined driving experience and off-road ability of a bakkie from Japan. We believe it's going to be right up there with the rest of them when the next model comes along – whenever that may be.

Specifications

Engine: 2,8-litre turbocharged and intercooled four-cylinder diesel

Power: 120kW @ 3600rpm

Torque: 360Nm @ 1800rpm

Gearbox: Six-speed manual

4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H and 4H

4x4 driving aids: Low-range

Claimed ground clearance: 220mm

Approach angle: 28 degrees

Departure angle: 23 degrees

Breakover angle: n/a

Wading depth: n/a

Price: R404 950

Service/maintenance plan: Five years/70 000km

In a nutshell

Land of origin: China

History: The story starts around 20 years ago, when the Chinese government started Foton with the sole purpose of building trucks. It now produces 650 000 vehicles a year, and most of them are Tunlands. In SA, it is distributed by Imperial, which adds a nice touch of confidence for those who are not familiar with the brand.

Replacement due: Not any time soon.

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): n/a

In summary

Good: Great engine from Cummins fitted to a bakkie that can take some serious punches. Comfortable and reasonably well specified.

Eish: It's getting pricey now, especially when compared to Chinese rivals. Still a bargain compared with Japanese rivals, however.

Overall verdict: Probably the best Chinese car we've experienced. **LW**

An underdog that runs with the big boys

Blurb to be supplied Blurb to be supplied Blurb to be supplied Blurb to be
supplied Blurb to be supplied Blurb to be supplied Blurb to be supplied

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



Retailing at just under R290 000, the GWM Steed 5E is the cheapest double-cab 4x4 on the market. If you're willing to live with the additional fuel consumption from a naturally aspirated petrol engine, you can have a brand-new Steed 4x4 double cab on your driveway for less than R240 000. To put that into perspective, that's more or less what a brand-new Toyota Hilux double-cab 4x4 cost in 2008...

But being the cheapest among highly rated rivals comes with its own problems. You immediately get underdog status, but that's something we kind of like at *Leisure Wheels*. After all, a predictable outcome is boring, but the unexpected makes a good story...

Despite rooting for the Steed in its capacity as the underdog, we knew it had one particular flaw that could make or break it in the dunes – turbo lag. We ran a GWM H5 with the same engine a while ago, so we knew about the three-second gap between putting your foot flat and the turbo kicking in.

On the streets of Johannesburg, it is something you can adapt to, but in driving conditions that call for quick responses and maintaining momentum, it's less than ideal.

Luckily, this Steed had a keen driver behind the wheel, which made progress a lot smoother. The driver, Sean Ebersohn, went into the adventure with the idea of properly testing the vehicle. Instead of simply nailing the Steed in the hopes of making it to the top of a dune, Sean took the time to see how far he could get in a particular gear. When he didn't make it, he reversed back and tried again. It was interesting to hear his feedback and insights on the Steed.

As it turned out, there was never a need to recover the Steed, despite our initial worries. It got down and dirty with the best of them, as shown in the accompanying picture.

The 5E is also a step up from the standard Steed 5 in the luxury department. Compared with the Steed 5, the E features small but significant changes to its interior and in the noise, vibration and harshness department, to make it a more suitable day-to-day car.

As standard, it comes with leather upholstery, touch-screen media interface, rear diff-lock, side steps, roll bar and a tyre pressure monitor, which is invaluable on a journey like this.

The Steed 5E has everything the mainstream bakkies offer, but at a significantly lower price. It has low range, all the necessary safety gadgets and an engine line-up that has proved itself reliable in the few years that GWM has been dealing in SA.



Sean and Kerry Ebersohn made light work of the dunes in their GWM Steed 5E.



“There are no words to describe the unbelievable experience that Namibia had to offer – from sandy roads, rocky terrain and riverbeds to the special sand dunes.

I'm sorry to say it, but the highlight of the four days was experiencing Namibia with my wife!

PS: Namibia's dunes are almost as hot as the GWM Steed 5E 2,0 VGT 4x4 we drove”.

There is, however, one other figure that was cause for concern. The ground clearance is only 194mm. But careful planning and driving enabled the Steed to go where the others did, confirming that this bakkie needn't back down from a challenge.

It's staggering that GWM can offer all of this for less than R300 000.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: China.

History: Great Wall Motors (GWM) was

Specifications

Engine: 2,0-litre four-cylinder turbocharged diesel

Power: 105kW @ 4000rpm

Torque: 305Nm @ 1800rpm

Gearbox: Six-speed manual

4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H and 4H

4x4 driving aids: Rear differential lock, low-range

Claimed ground clearance: 210mm

Approach angle: 30 degrees

Departure angle: 24 degrees

Break over angle: n/a

Wading depth: n/a

Price: R289 900

Service/maintenance plan: Optional

Service intervals: 15 000km

formed in 1984 and became China's largest exporter of SUVs in 2010. Its first attempt at a luxury double cab came in 2006 with the introduction of the Steed, known in other parts of the world as the Wingle.

The second generation Steed, called the Steed 5, was introduced in 2011. GWM were so confident in this bakkie that in 2009 they even started exporting them to that car-killing patch of land known as Australia.

Replacement due: Unknown.

Average double cab sales per month: Unknown.

In summary

Good: It's a fine bakkie that does everything it should do. Hard to ignore at the price.

Eish: Interior quality is still a step behind, and the turbo lag can be a hassle.

Overall verdict: GWM became the most successful Chinese brand operating in SA thanks to products like the Steed 5. It's a quality vehicle at a reasonable price and it can do everything the other bakkies do, albeit a bit slower. **LW**

The best of both worlds?

The KB has always been a firm favourite among those in search of a rugged, capable farm bakkie. The recent upgrades, however, have made it more sophisticated

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



The Isuzu KB has never enjoyed the same sort of popularity or sales success as the Toyota Hilux, and we can't work out why.

When you peel back the exterior, you are left with more or less the same bakkie, and by that we certainly don't mean that the two vehicles share the same engine or chassis, but rather a mechanical philosophy.

The KB's 3,0-litre turbocharged engine is powerful, but one can hardly call it advanced. Like the Hilux, it's a study in simplicity, and all the better for it.

It's the same story with every mechanical component. The suspension is independent at the front, with a set of leaf springs at the back. Drive is sent to the wheels via a five-speed automatic transmission that does a decent job by itself but, more importantly, will do what you tell it to do when you override it manually. This is particularly handy when you need to gear down as soon as you're over the crest of a dune, in order to rely on the compression to keep you in a straight line on the way down. We also tried descending a few dunes in full automatic mode and the KB's gearbox did a stellar job.

This bakkie is in its element when it's off-roading and we can see why it's so popular with the farming folk. The steering is light and the turning circle is fairly compact. With an automatic gearbox, you can drive off road using only one hand, though that is obviously not a good idea. After a few mishaps on the trip, we were forced to have a lunch behind the wheel, and we can report that you can drive up and down Divorce Pass with one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding a ham and cheese sandwich.

It took some time getting used to the KB's nuances in the dunes, but only because of the differences between the way the car behaves in four-high and four-low. The low-range obviously makes descending easier, but it also means the KB has a top speed of only 40km/h, which is difficult when you have to get the car to 120km/h to reach the top of the next dune.

For the most part, we kept the KB in four-high with the traction and stability control switched off, which turned out to be the sweet spot we were searching for. The gearbox was left in automatic, as it did a decent job and it was one less thing to think about when you were constantly assaulted by at least ten different things you need to take into consideration to keep the wheels firmly planted on a dune.

The KB's stability control system intervenes a lot sooner than those in any other bakkie we've driven, which is something the average user will appreciate. Driving with it off, however, is much easier than you would



"For us the highlight of the trip has to be each and every time we crested a dune and saw what was on the other side! We soon learnt the term for these very steep drops is 'slip face' but soon found a more colourful term for these terrifying drops!"

expect. We are not suggesting the KB is sporty, but keeping it in a straight line was not difficult.

As with most bakkies, it's inclined to break traction at the rear, but you merely power through and rely on the relatively communicative steering to set you straight.

It's a confidence inspiring off-roader that's also comfortable on a day-to-day basis. In many ways it's the best compromise between these two very different activities.

The recent facelift, which included an interior overhaul, with a touch-screen and navigation as standard on high-end models, makes it a better proposition than ever before.

Why Isuzu sales aren't up there with Ford and Toyota is beyond us...

In a nutshell

Land of origin: It's a Japanese brand, but the KB is built right here in SA.

History: Isuzu first started up in 1949 and entered into a capital alliance with General Motors in 1971. The brand has always enjoyed a loyal local following, which was bolstered by the introduction of an all-new model in 2007. The current model followed in 2012, with a facelift taking place a few months ago.

Replacement due: Still a few years away

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 519

Lunga Ntsendwana and Busi Mphahla enjoyed the responsiveness of the KB's 3,0-litre turbocharged engine and automatic gearbox. They started as novices in the dunes, but soon got the hang of this tough activity.



Specifications

Engine 3,0-litre turbocharged and intercooled four-cylinder diesel

Power 130kW @ 3600rpm

Torque 380Nm @ 1800rpm

Gearbox Five-speed automatic

4x4 system Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H/4H and low range

4x4-driving aids Rear differential lock, traction control and stability control

Claimed ground clearance 220mm

Approach angle 30 degrees

Departure angle 22,7 degrees

Break-over angle 22,4 degrees

Wading depth 600mm

Price R529 700

Service/maintenance plan Five-year/ 90 000km

In summary

Good: Robust, reliable, comfortable and good looking.

Eish: It may be time for a new engine.

Overall verdict: The KB has always had a loyal fan base in SA and the recent upgrades to the interior will no doubt build on what it has achieved so far. For a top-of-the-line bakkie, it's keenly priced as well. **LW**

It's on its way...

The all-new Mitsubishi Triton is a very good bakkie but, unfortunately, you'll have to wait until mid-2016 to get one

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photographs:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



This is the all-new Mitsubishi Triton and the first thing that stands out is... the comfortable seats. No, seriously. After driving every single car in the group to the airport parking lot, we can honestly say that no other bakkie has seats quite as comfortable as those you'll find in the new Triton. But that's not all we liked about it, as we had the opportunity to drive it in the dunes a few days later...

A press release in our inbox when we got home confirmed the new direction Mitsubishi is taking with the Triton. This time round, it's focusing on comfort and it has labelled the new Triton as a Sports Utility Vehicle with the added benefit of a load bin. We have to agree. It rides well and the class-leading turning circle of just 5,9m is going to be a joy around town.

Standard equipment hasn't been confirmed yet, but the model we drove came with all the bells and whistles. Bakkie owners who spend most of their time in the city should seriously consider looking at the Triton when it arrives in SA.

Does this mean the Triton is no longer the authentic 4x4 it once was? Not at all. It can still get rough with the best of them. In fact, on this trip the Mitsubishi sailed through without getting stuck once. This is a particularly impressive feat when you consider that it was at the back of the convoy for the first part of the trip, which meant it had to endure tracks that had often been cut up by the cars in front.

As downsizing is the current trend, the all-new Triton comes with a 2,4-litre turbodiesel engine. It's good for 133kW and 430Nm of torque and can be mated to either a five-speed automatic gearbox or six-speed manual transmission.

The top-of-the-range 4x4 is equipped with Mitsubishi's famous Super Select four-wheel drive system. This offers four types of driving mode, including full-time four-wheel drive, two-wheel drive and four-low.

From our short drive, we can tell you three important things about it. The interior is sumptuous, the engine is a powerhouse and the gear change is smooth and positive.

The Triton hasn't been getting the amount of attention lavished on the new Ford Ranger and the highly anticipated 2016 Hilux, but it just might trump both if Mitsubishi can bring it in at the right price.

In top specification, the new Triton offers cruise control, a keyless operating system, dual-zone auto air-conditioning, a reverse camera mated to a touch-screen full-colour navigation system, an electrically adjustable



The all-new Mitsubishi Triton makes light work of the dunes. Braam and Laine Faul were lucky enough to drive one of the few new Tritons already in the country.



"There were many highlights. Driving for hours up and over dunes and then suddenly coming across a tented camp in the middle of nowhere with a 5-star dining room... That was one of the highlights."

driver's seat, tilt and telescopic steering wheel adjustment and leather upholstery. A simple turning knob in the centre console allows for easy shifting between the various driving modes.

The Triton is well equipped in the safety department, having all the usual high-end features including seven airbags and Isofix mounting points, which are standard across the double cab range.

This is a seriously capable bakkie, both on and off the road, and we look forward to seeing how it stacks up against the other new models heading for SA in 2016.

Specifications

Engine: 2,4-litre turbocharged diesel
Power: 133kW @ 3500rpm
Torque: 430Nm @ 2500rpm
Gearbox: Six-speed manual or five-speed automatic
4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H and 4H
4x4 driving aids: Rear differential lock, traction control, low range
Claimed ground clearance: 205mm
Approach angle: 30 degrees
Departure angle: 28 degrees
Breakover angle: 24 degrees
Wading depth: 500mm
Price: Not available yet.
Service/maintenance plan: Not available yet.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: Designed in Japan, built in Thailand.

History: The Triton started out life in 1978, but back then it was known as the Forte. The second generation model was introduced in 1986 and the third – a firm favourite in SA – arrived in 1996. The current Triton was introduced internationally in 2005 and the all-new model is due in SA in mid-2016.

Replacement due: Mid-2016.

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): n/a

In summary

Good: Looks good, drives well and should be a fantastic vehicle to live with day-to-day.

Eish: Nothing we could find!

Overall verdict: If Mitsubishi manages to bring in the new Triton at the right price, it may just be the bakkie of choice for 2016. **LW**

Young at heart

The Nissan Navara has been around for more than a decade,
but it's still good enough to take its younger rivals head-on

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



The fact that the Nissan Navara, which is more than a decade old this year, is still able to keep up with the newer, more advanced machines in this company is testament to how well the Japanese brand was designed in the first place. Sure, there has been a nip here and a tuck there, but the basic car has remained the same since inception.

One of its main selling points has always been the plush ride quality and roomy interior. No other bakkie rides quite as well as this one, or offers enough rear space to house three fully-grown adults.

It's nicely appointed as well, with LE models including Bluetooth connectivity, climate control and a host of safety features. But to focus on these attributes would be wrong because, in the right hands, the Navara is a very capable vehicle.

To begin with, it has a formidable full-length, fully boxed ladder frame. This gives it torsional strength, so you don't have to feel nervous about giving it a hard time.

The engine, though smaller than a few others in this company, packs an impressive punch. It's the famous 2,5-litre turbocharged four-cylinder unit that develops 128kW and 403Nm of torque in the double-cab 4x4 with a six-speed manual transmission. Order a Navara with automatic transmission and these figures increase to 140kW and 450Nm. That's why every Navara 4x4 has a tow rating of 3000kg for a braked trailer. Not bad for a 2,5-litre bakkie.

The Navara 4x4 comes with a rotary dial on the dashboard which allows you to switch easily between the various driving modes. You get 2WD High for the days you're driving to the office and 4WD High for the times when you just want to get as far away from it as possible.

In 4WD High, the transfer case splits the torque equally between the front and rear axles, enabling the driver to cruise confidently on a gravel surface. Naturally, there's also 4WD Low for those serious off-road conditions, and a locking rear differential to add that extra dash of traction.

It's at home in the rough stuff and, it has to be said, remains one of the best looking double-cab bakkies out there. There's none of that "rounding off the edges" that seems to be the rage these days. It was styled with a ruler and a pencil, and we quite like that.

A replacement has already been showcased and it has been spied a few times in SA, so we know it's coming soon. As with the Hilux, we are saddened by the Navara's imminent departure, having built up many fond memories behind the wheel.

More than a decade old, but still good enough to run with the big dogs. Gavin and Lani Rheeder were very happy with their choice of vehicle.



"During the trip we were faced with the most amazingly diverse landscapes... all bone dry but somehow all beautiful. However it is the people of Namibia that touched us most. Exceptionally warm and friendly!"

It's worth mentioning that you can get a Navara with a 180kW/550Nm V6 turbodiesel engine, but it's expensive. Even so, it is quite simply the most powerful double cab you can get and highly entertaining to drive.

A decently specified 4x4 XE retails for R440 000 these days and that's exceptional value for money. As the Navara moves closer to being replaced, Nissan will start offering deals on these bakkies and they will be worth investigating. You might even get the chance to buy a brand-new Navara for less than that.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: Designed in Japan, built in Spain.

History: The Nissan Navara was a replacement for the Hardbody, but in SA the



Specifications

Engine: 2,5-litre turbocharged and intercooled diesel
Power: 128kW @ 4000rpm
Torque: 403Nm @ 2000rpm
Gearbox: Six-speed manual
4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H, 4H and 4L
4x4 driving aids: Rear differential lock, traction control, low range
Claimed ground clearance: 233mm
Approach angle: 29 degrees
Departure angle: 22 degrees
Breakover angle: n/a
Wading depth: 450mm
Price: R439 000
Service/maintenance plan: Three years/90 000km
Service intervals: 15 000km

latter soldiered on as the NP300. The Navara is offered only as a King Cab or a double cab, with the NP300 serving as the workhorse in the range. A new model is on the way, but no release date has been set.


Replacement due: Not sure, but should be within the next year... or two.

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 125.

In summary

Good: As impressive as it was eight years ago when it first arrived in SA. Comfortable, capable and very well priced.

Eish: Nothing much, to be honest.

Overall verdict: It's getting on, but at that price it would be tough to find a better bakkie. 

An impressive ambassador for India

The Tata Xenon is about half the price of some of the other bakkies in this line-up. Does that mean it's only half as good?

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



In December 2012, we took the Tata Xenon on our annual safari, which also happened to take place in Namibia. For that particular trip, Tata opted to fit the Xenon with a few modifications, including an Old Man Emu suspension. This time round the car was 100% standard. Gulp!

It's obviously far removed from the likes of the Ford Ranger and Mitsubishi Triton, but with a retail price of just under R300 000, it's about half the price of the facelifted Ranger Wildtrak 4x4 automatic. At that price it simply cannot be ignored, especially in a world that seems to be on the brink of another recession.

But it's not only the price that impresses. The Xenon is a loveable car because it's so honest about itself. It's not trying to be something it's not, and in a world where various body styles are being blended to create new niches, it's refreshing to find such an industrial and honest approach to bakkie building.

The vehicle's simple design, robust components and rubber-lined load bin make it the default choice for anyone in the market for a dual-purpose workhorse. It can carry loads of up to 975kg during the week and still be quite suitable for family transport over the weekends.

Given the low price, you'd expect the Xenon to be rather ordinary, but a close look at the specification sheet reveals that the innards are actually quite modern.

It has a 2,2-litre turbocharged diesel engine that develops a perfectly acceptable 110kW and 320Nm of torque from just 1800rpm. A five-speed manual gearbox is the only option available. It has low-range and a locking rear differential for extreme off-roading, which came in handy at some of the more daunting obstacles on this trip.

Its ability to shift from two-high to four-high at the press of a button was a welcome surprise, as this is a facility usually found in cars that cost at least R200 000 more.

The Xenon fared exceptionally well, given its skinny tyres and narrow torque band, but with the right driver behind the wheel, you'd be surprised how far you can push one of these vehicles.

The cabin can justifiably be referred to as refined, thanks to a host of convenience features such as Bluetooth connectivity and satellite navigation. The interior quality may not be the best in the business, but the extremely low price means there can be no quibbles on this score.

One also has to consider the rate of growth from Tata's side. A mere five years ago there



The Tata Xenon powering its way up one of the tougher dunes on the second day. Kyri and Stav Michael were suitably impressed.



"It was an awesome trip with beautiful scenery in an amazing country. I also enjoyed the interaction between the representatives from the various competitor brands, which gave me some valuable insight."

were serious doubts about buying an Indian bakkie, just as there were about "going Chinese", but look at the difference between this car and the one it replaced. They are miles apart – so much so that we wonder whether the next generation Xenon might actually be a worthy competitor in the upper echelons of the double-cab segment.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: India. Built in India, Argentina and Thailand.

History: Tata's first bakkie was named the Mobile and was introduced in 1988. The first

Specifications

Engine: 2,2-litre four-cylinder turbocharged diesel
Power: 110kW @ 4000rpm
Torque: 320Nm @ 1500rpm
Gearbox: Five-speed manual
4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with shift-on-the-fly selection between 2H and 4H
4x4 driving aids: Rear differential lock, low-range
Claimed ground clearance: 210mm
Approach angle: 26 degrees
Departure angle: 22 degrees
Break over angle: n/a
Wading depth: 400mm
Price: R294 995
Service/maintenance plan: Five-year/75 000km
Service intervals: 15 000km

and second generation bakkies were not sold in SA. The vehicle made its debut here in 2005, named the Telcoline.

The Xenon came next in 2007, showing just how far the company had come in 20 years – all the way from a horrid single cab with a 40kW engine to a competitive double cab with a modern 2,2-litre 110kW turbocharged diesel engine.

Replacement due: Unknown.

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 25.

In summary

Good: It's a lot of bakkie at the price.

Eish: Interior quality still not great.

Overall verdict: It's an option worth considering if you have a limited amount to spend. There are only a few proper off-roaders selling at this price. **lw**

A fond farewell

The Toyota Hilux has been around for ages and a replacement is less than two months away, but we can't help feeling sad at the thought of waving goodbye to the old girl one last time

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



Looking back at the illustrious history of the Toyota Hilux, it's hard to pick a specific generation that stands out above the rest.

The fourth generation 2,2-litre petrol was good, and so was the 3,0-litre KZ-TE from generation six, but we think that most of the fond memories and epic tales will concern the 3,0-litre turbocharged diesel engine with the letters D-4D stamped on it.

These days it is out-gunned by its competitors, but don't forget that it was an advanced piece of kit when it first arrived in SA in 2005. Owners used to brag about its 120kW and 343Nm of torque. That engine still does a perfectly acceptable job of lugging the Hilux over obstacles, but its biggest selling point has always been dependability – not just from the engine but also from Toyota's extensive dealer network. Overall reliability is one less thing to worry about when you climb into your tent somewhere in the middle of nowhere.

Have a look at the image to the right, of the Hilux flying over a dune. It was first in line to tackle the first big dune in our path, and this turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The waiting group couldn't see the other side of the dune, but as the Hilux flew through the air – rather majestically, we might add – one person couldn't help but comment that it would be fine, because "it's a Hilux". He added: "If it rolls, we'll just *goof* it back on its tyres and they can drive on." That perfectly sums up everything you need to know about this bakkie.

As far as the mechanicals are concerned, it's a very basic vehicle. It has a double-wishbone suspension up front, leaf springs at the back and a five-speed manual gearbox with a transfer case and low-range in the middle. The low-range gears are engaged the good old-fashioned way, via a *kort stokkie*.

The all-new Hilux will have a dial, as is the norm these days, and the *stokkie* is one of the main things we'll miss about this car. Turning a dial is easy and a lot fancier, but there's just something deeply fulfilling about working that short lever and hearing the satisfying mechanical sound of the power going to all four wheels.

The same can be said about engaging the diff lock. In all likelihood, this action will hardly be noticeable in the new model, but the current one still gives you a nice shove and an accompanying "thunk" to let you know that both wheels on the rear axle are now rotating at the same speed. It has to be said, though, that this action is not often necessary because a Hilux with low-range engaged is a nearly unstoppable force.

Even when it's not doing this kind of



Morné and Kirby Assam were the brave duo behind this epic jump. Luckily they were in a Hilux, so they made it safely through to the other side.



"The thought of going into the desert was petrifying. But the Leisure Wheels team put me at ease and encouraged me to try the dunes. I did, and it was lovely! Will I do it again, I'm not so sure."

thing, the Hilux is a comfortable and relaxing cruiser. Name it and it's got it – leather seats, Bluetooth, climate control, cruise control and a reverse camera.

The old lady will be sorely missed – not just by us, but by the many thousands of South Africans who created fond memories behind the wheel of their own Hilux.

In a nutshell

Land of origin: Designed in Japan, built in sunny SA. To date, six generations of Hilux have been built at the Prospecton plant outside Durban.

History: The Hilux first arrived in SA in the last quarter of 1969, sporting a price tag of just R1525. It became the segment leader a year

Specifications

Engine: 3,0-litre inline four-cylinder turbocharged and intercooled diesel
Power: 120kW
Torque: 343Nm at 1400rpm
Gearbox: Five-speed manual or four-speed automatic
4x4 system: Part-time 4x4 with 2H, 4H and 4L.
4x4-driving aids: Rear differential lock, traction and stability control
Claimed ground clearance: 222mm
Approach angle: 30 degrees
Departure angle: 23 degrees
Breakover angle: 25 degrees
Wading depth: 700mm
Price: R523 300
Service intervals: 10 000km
Service/maintenance plan: 5 years/90 000km

later – a title it would hold until very recently. The first double cab was sold here in 1984, which helped the Hilux on its way to one million sales in SA, achieved in 2015. Replacement due: February 2016.

Average double cab and extended cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 1309.

In summary

Good: Tough as nails, nearly unstoppable off-road. Holds its value exceptionally well compared to other vehicles on these pages.

Eish: It's starting to show its age and is no longer the segment leader it once was.

Overall verdict: The Hilux is a legendary vehicle and we'll remember it fondly. The new one, however, is fairly good, according to reports we've seen. With the introduction of the all-new Hilux in February, you should be able to pick up a seventh generation model for a good price. It may not be as modern as some of its main rivals and it may be short of power, but it cannot be denied that it is still a good vehicle ten years after its launch. **LW**

An epic all-rounder

The Amarok eight-speed automatic sets the benchmark in terms of gearbox refinement, but low-range gearing isn't part of the package. We didn't think it would make it through...

Text: Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Jannie Herbst and Tyson Jopson



The press release for the Amarok automatic states that it has permanent four-wheel drive and a first gear that has been configured as a low-range gear, which makes pulling away easier when off-roading or towing. Other than the low-range mimicking first gear, low-range isn't mentioned again. Oh dear...

We know from experience that full-time four-wheel drive can only take you so far. Fortunately, nobody told the Amarok and its pilots about this, so they managed to cross some of the harshest terrain imaginable without getting stuck!

There are a few reasons why the Amarok surprised us as much as it did.

The torque is split 40:60 between the front and rear axles, which is as close to perfect as you can get for the purposes of dune driving. There's also an off-road button which engages the ABS off-road setting and hill descent control. This means you don't have to use engine compression to slow the car down, as was the case with every other vehicle on our safari.

But the biggest weapon in the Amarok's arsenal is the eight-speed automatic gearbox. It uses a torque converter, which offers less slip than one of VW's famous DSG gearboxes. But the shift from one gear to the next is on a par with a DSG box, so the disruption in power is over faster than you can blink an eye.

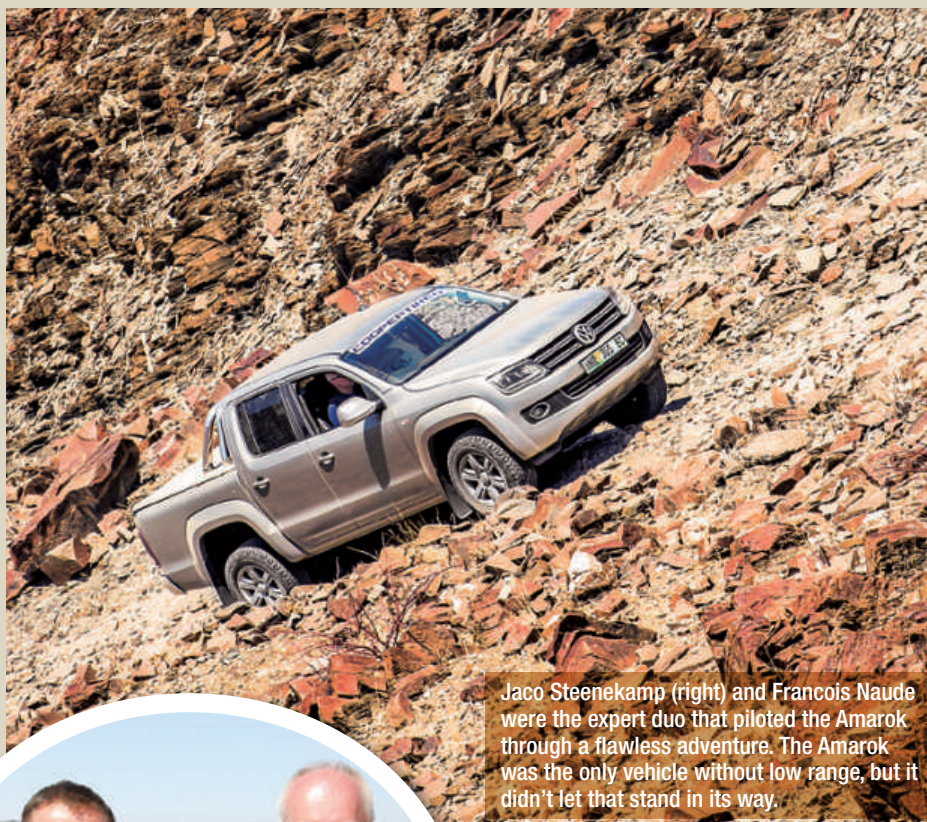
This gearbox was developed specifically for the Amarok, so its "brain" understands the wants and needs of off-road enthusiasts. Auto boxes tend to hunt between the gears, but the Volksie always seems to be one step ahead of the driver. And besides, with 420Nm available from 1750rpm, it really doesn't have to work hard to find the power.

Another of the Amarok's stunning array of features has always been the quality of its interior, and VW made it even better recently by changing a few things here and there. The most noticeable change is the new steering wheel, which wouldn't look out of place in a Touareg.

We've always thought of the Amarok as offering the best compromise between comfort and rugged off-road ability, with the obvious bias being towards on-tar driving, but this trip revealed that we were under the wrong impression. The Amarok can go off road with the best of them, while offering SUV-like comfort.

If this is what VW managed to come up with the first time they decided to build a double cab, we look forward to seeing what they produce when the Amarok is replaced a few years from now.

Oh, and for those who can't get over the fact that it has a 2,0-litre engine, a 3,0-litre V6



Jaco Steenekamp (right) and Francois Naude were the expert duo that piloted the Amarok through a flawless adventure. The Amarok was the only vehicle without low range, but it didn't let that stand in its way.



"After a week in Namibia and the dunes I have two things to say. Africa is the most beautiful continent on the planet, but you're going to need higher dunes than that if you want to get a Volkswagen Amarok eight-speed automatic stuck."

is due in SA in 2016. Better start thinking of some new Amarok jokes to replace those silly "only Amaroks and milk come in two litres" stories...

In a nutshell

Land of origin: Designed in Germany, built in Argentina.

History: Volkswagen first revealed its intentions in 2005 and the Amarok followed five years

Specifications

Engine: 2,0-litre bi-turbo four-cylinder diesel

Power: 132kW @ 4000rpm

Torque: 420Nm @ 1750rpm

Gearbox: Eight-speed automatic with permanent four-wheel drive

4x4 driving aids: Off-road ABS, traction control, stability control and hill descent control

Claimed ground clearance: 250mm

Approach angle: 28 degrees

Departure angle: 23.6 degrees

Breakover angle: 23 degrees

Wading depth: 500mm

Price: R534 600

Service/maintenance plan: five-year/90 000km

Service intervals: 15 000km

later. It sold well, and in 2012 VW announced that it would begin assembly in its Hanover plant to supplement supplies coming out of Argentina.

Replacement due: 2019

Average double cab sales per month (August to October 2015): 279

In summary

Good: Looks; class-leading gearbox and interior; comparatively light on diesel.

Eish: You'll constantly have to listen to wise-cracking Hilux, KB and Ranger owners.

Overall verdict: A great bakkie that has a lot going for it, particularly if you spend most of your time on tar. **LW**



How to choose the right 12V fridge/freezer

With so many fridge/freezers on the market, finding the right one to suit your needs can be tricky

The decision to buy a portable fridge/freezer is a daunting one. Aside from the cost (camping fridges aren't cheap!) you are likely to face some tough choices, such as brand and model, and also the capacity of the fridge.

So where do you start? Well, the first consideration should be the qualities that make a really good fridge. In no particular order, here are the crucial issues that you need to know about 12V refrigeration.

Insulation

While many people assume that compressor performance is the key to low power consumption, a more accurate argument can be made in favour of insulation – the very heart of fridge/freezer efficiency. The job of the compressor is comparatively easy: pull the temperature down. But the fridge's ability to maintain that temperature without having to continuously cycle the compressor on and off is the task of the unit's insulation.



National Luna boasts the largest selection of 12V portable fridge / freezers in the world.

Compressor

It's the compressor's job to pull the fridge's temperature down, and while most fridges are able to achieve this to a certain degree, it's important to note that many fridge statistics are quoted at an ambient temperature of 25°C. Unfortunately, as we all know, the African bush is seldom so mild, particularly if the air conditioner is not in use and the fridge is enclosed in a sealed 4x4.

An important consideration is the compressor's ability to reduce the temperature as fast as possible. This feature may draw more amps initially, but over time it's just as efficient and certainly far more convenient than having to wait for your drinks to cool!

Conductivity

Conduction, possibly the most overlooked quality of 12V refrigeration, is the effectiveness by which a fridge extracts heat.

Sadly, because there's no way of determining how much conductive material (generally copper pipe) is used in the manufacturing of a fridge (you would have to cut the fridge in half to see!) it's often the easiest way for a manufacturer to cut costs. This can be done either by substituting aluminium or steel pipe for copper – a superior conductor – or simply by using less piping.

Electronics

This is an often forgotten feature of refrigeration. Electronics not only play a vital role in accurately controlling the fridge and/or freezer's temperature, but also contribute towards power management and reliability. In some cases, electronics add a few handy features, such as voltage monitoring and intelligent battery protection. This is the ability to automatically shut down the fridge to protect the vehicle's battery where there is a danger of a power shortage.

Reliability and service

This is arguably the most important feature of any portable fridge/freezer, particularly when the hopes and dreams of your overland holiday rest on the fridge's ability to protect your food. Of course, from a visual point of view, it's almost impossible to gauge the reliability of a fridge, but a lot can be discovered by simply asking about the brand's backup service, the availability of spares and the manufacturer's business record and history. **LW**

As cool as it gets

National Luna recently launched a new model, the 60-litre Twin. It is currently the world's most powerful 12V fridge/freezer combination. It boasts a number of high-end features, such as:

- Industry-leading Danfoss-designed compressor with three-year warranty;
- Dual controls for individual temperature adjustment per compartment;
- Battery protection with automatic cut-off and alarm;
- Up to 60mm of insulation;
- Capable of -18°C at a 43°C ambient temperature (highest international fridge specification);
- Generous copper pipe conductors;
- Robust carry handles which double as tie-down points;
- Rigid stainless steel construction, with the option of aluminium;



The Twin is priced from R10 500 and available at all leading outdoor and 4x4 stores. Call 011-452-5438 to find your nearest dealer.

Designed and manufactured entirely in South Africa, with a complete range of spare parts.

National Luna, boasting the largest range of 12V fridge/freezers in the world, is the only manufacturer of off-road fridges in SA and the preferred supplier to all major off-road trailer and caravan manufacturers. Visit www.nationalluna.com for more information.



Opt for a stainless steel fridge if you intend moving the unit around a lot – it's far more hard wearing.



Africa's walking encyclopaedia

David Bristow is an author, editor, conservationist and traveller. Scott Ramsay spoke to him about his life and adventures

Whether by boat, horseback, or foot, David Bristow will do whatever is necessary to get the perfect shot.

My first boss in the photo-journalism industry was David Bristow, one-time editor of *Getaway* magazine. We called him the “Walking Encyclopaedia of Africa”, and he was a mentor like no other. There was little that he didn’t know about the continent’s wild places, and very few that he had not visited himself.

David is a widely published authority on nature travel and history, and his *Best Walks of the Drakensberg* is by far the best book for any hiker – both experienced and novice – planning to explore SA’s biggest mountain range. His recent book, *African Icons*, co-published with Roger and Pat de la Harpe, is a sumptuous collection of wildlife and wilderness travel experiences in Africa.

I asked him...

Which are your top three wildlife regions in Africa?

I prefer the places where you can still get a sense of “old wild Africa” – where the animals are less accustomed to human presence and the safari lodges are more like camps than villas.

My two favourite parks are Ruaha and Katavi, both in Tanzania. They are, as one safari operator put it, “big places where big animals are always doing big things”.

This is most true of Ruaha, with its grand vistas peppered with baobab trees, and with the greatest remaining concentration of wild lions. The lions here occur mostly in large prides, capable of killing elephants.

Katavi has Africa’s largest buffalo herd, which in turn makes for plenty of predators.

Most of the safari camps in these two national parks consist of canvas tents, and elephants come around your tent to eat tamarind seeds.

On the other hand, the day my doctor tells me I have to give up red wine, I’m cashing in and heading to the Okavango Delta.

Your three most memorable wildlife sightings – or wilderness experiences?

Nothing has come close to my first walking safari in Mana Pools National Park with Steve Pope back in 1994. Steve died from cancer two years ago, but his spirit lives on in all of those who shared this incredible experience. With Steve as the guide, we would approach the big game on foot, often freakily close, but he taught us how to read the animals’ behaviour and signals, and respond appropriately.

I saw a leopard kill a few metres away, and herds of kudu drinking almost at touching distance. Elephants brushed against us on their way to drink at the spring where he would have us camp. Not to mention lions making buffalo kids around the edges of our camps.

When I was a teenager my friend Don Hunter,

Clockwise from right: Working with the Bushmen of the Kalahari was one of the pleasures of compiling the book; This pride in Ruaha was led by a one-eyed female that was a formidable hunter despite her disability, bringing down elephants as well as buffalo; Children are children. Wherever the adventurers went they found a bunch of kids just wanting to have fun; Chill time in Ruaha. Nothing beats sundowners in the bush!



who was always willing to lead me into trouble, suggested we city kids hitch-hike from Johannesburg to the Okavango. I had no idea what I was in for, but he had been there the previous year on a school geography tour.

We paid a Bayei boatman R10 to pole us up the Thamalakane and Santatadibe channels to Chitabe Island, where we slept on the ground and caught fish to eat.

It was only two weeks later, when we emerged from the “swamps”, that we learned that the island had been abandoned because of the menacing lion population. They certainly scared me, but I kept the fire going all night, and the experience was my first big life changer.

Third is about getting my favourite wildlife photograph. Back in about 1995 I visited Ruaha National Park for the first time, with Wild Frontiers wild man John Addison. The only lodge there at the time was Ruaha River Lodge and John, lodge owner Peter Fox and I spent a week together in wildlife heaven.

As we were nearing the airstrip to depart, we noticed a leopard in the grass next to the track, heading for the big baobab we had spied earlier with a zebra carcass in the fork about eight metres up.

Everything was teed up: the sun was just setting behind us, the leopard was making for the tree, I had a new spool of Fuji Velvia in my Nikon F5 camera. I set it to continuous shooting mode, waited until the leopard approached the base of the tree, put my trigger finger on the shutter button and said, “don’t anyone dare move, or breathe ...” held my own breath, squeezed gently and fired. We very nearly missed our plane to Zanzibar but I got the pictures – all 36 of them.

You’ve met and worked with some fascinating people in African conservation and tourism. Who has inspired you most, and why?

So much of my own life’s trajectory was primed by my friendship with Don Hunter – two teenage trips to the Okavango, later managing associated lodges there (Xakanaxa and Tsaro), spearfishing, scuba diving, rock climbing, paragliding, mountain biking and generally messing about and getting into trouble – so without him I might have been a filing clerk. When he got married his mother asked, in all seriousness, whether I was going to join them on honeymoon. But his bride, Shirley, said no!

Next was the professional satisfaction I gained working with the person I think is the best nature writer in SA – the only one I really rate – Don Pincock. It might be all the drugs he took when he was young, or the revolutionaries he hung out with, but he has a way of taking the seemingly ordinary and turning it round and round and then pulling out a mesmerising literary trick from his sleeve.

My pleasure in that process was being his

UNDER THE BAOBAB

INTERVIEW SERIES



Relaxing after a brisk canter through the Okavango Delta wetlands.

editor, and as some wise person once said, every great writer needs a great editor (it was Bill Bryson in his book, *Made in America*). We made a formidable literary team for a few years back when.

Third would be Colin Bell, co-founder of both the Wilderness Safaris and Great Plains conservation-safari outfits. Without his guiding force, the safari industry in Africa would be far less ethical or indeed profitable.

We first met as students, spending weekends on hot cliff faces while ringing and weighting Cape vulture chicks for the Vulture Study Group. Our lives have intertwined since then and we spent a few happy years recently researching and putting together the game-changing book, *Africa's Finest: the 50 most environmentally responsible and sustainable lodges in Africa*. The website, if you care to get the inside track on sustainability is www.africasfinest.co.za.

And who are the unsung or not-so-famous people in African conservation that you have been impressed by? And why?

That list is long. I have been impressed, and greatly influenced by every person I have met who has dedicated his or her life to making the world a better place, or putting fingers in leaking dykes to try to stop the human flood damage.

My first environmental heroes were the good people of Greenpeace. Returning from military service in the mid-1970s, I seriously considered becoming an "eco-terrorist". The book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, by Edward Abbey, helped stoke those fires, but I went to Rhodes and got a degree instead.

People like Frank Lloyd Wright, who showed architects they could use natural materials and create buildings appropriate to their settings, have greatly influenced me (my first chosen

direction was architecture). Field biologist George Schaller and his protégés, Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, I think have been among the most inspirational of African conservationists. They started so much of what we do and know today.

After that, every game ranger, field ranger, anti-poaching patroller, wildlife vet and gate guard who has devoted his life to protecting our wild places. I don't say this as mere a head nod, but in deep appreciation of these people, without whom our world would be a lot bleaker.

What does African wilderness and wildlife mean to you, personally? Why do you love it so much? What do you miss most about it?

I think it's got everything to do with our psychological link to the Africa of today and the Africa of time past, the old DNA connection elaborated on much more eloquently by the likes of wilderness philosophers Ian Player and Ian McCallum.

I grew up playing in the veld, collecting snakes and birds' eggs and all that stuff. Stones, crystals, tortoise shells, a feather here, a fossil there... it all intrigued me. Among all the sex and drugs and rock 'n roll of northern Johannesburg, I fell in among a few fellow nature lovers.

I think the apocalyptic moment for me was when I pulled a copy of Eugene Marais' *The Soul of the White Ant* from my parents' bookshelf. There I found the Highveld laid bare, in cross-section if you like, and I had also found my first and most abiding South African idol.

What I have never been able to fathom is when my political enlightenment began, with parents who stood to the right of Attila the Hun! I remember the time of arrogant brown-uniformed policemen around the time of Sharpeville, bullying black people on the streets, and I just knew somehow in my five-year-old head that it was not right.

In the same sort of visceral way, loving and



One of the most awe inspiring sights in Africa – the migration of the wildebeest in the Serengeti.

wanting to protect the natural environment just seemed to come naturally to me. Simple things like littering, or throwing a stompie out a car window, really wind me up. It seems that all my life I have been an environmental Catcher in the Rye, watching people running towards the cliff edge of pollution, deforestation, environmental rape and ruin. But it's the

nightmare version, where I see it all happening and cannot do anything about it. Then I wake up and realise it is not a dream, it's my every waking moment, as though I'm the person in that painting by Edvard Munch and I'm screaming: stop it, just stop it, for goodness sake!

As I've grown older I suppose I have grown

a thick skin to the ongoing environmental degradation around me, but I have not stopped caring deeply. You need to be nice – to other people and to all living things, the entire biota. How could you not be? But most of us just keep on soiling our environmental doorsteps.

Angry, me? I used to be, but I guess I'm more Zen about it nowadays. **LW**

African Icons, by David Bristow and Roger and Pat de la Harpe



David Bristow and award-winning photographers Roger and Pat de la Harpe (authors of about 50 books) have pooled their talents and produced a book on Africa's must-see places.

They recently documented and photographed the 21 most iconic places in Africa, including Table Mountain, the High Atlas mountains, the wonders of ancient Egypt, the East African savanna, the great deserts of the Kalahari and the Namib, the jungles of central Africa and Ibo Island in Mozambique.

The result is a book of spectacular pictures and insightful text. Each copy is hand bound in leather and has a page that can be tailored as a gift to a friend.

"We have sought out the foremost designers, printers, binders and other publishing partners," says David. "It is in every respect a work of fine art and craft – the smithing of the words, the magnificence of the images and the hand binding in authentic leathers.

"We hope this is a book that will sit proudly on the tables and in the salons of those who love the history of exploration and discovery of what was once thought of as the dark continent."

The book costs R3500 and a percentage of proceeds from sales will be donated to Angels' Care Centre, in KwaZulu-Natal, which incorporates a feeding scheme for indigent children, an adult literacy programme and a rape crisis clinic. To order, go to www.africanicons.co.za.



Cape Union Mart gear review

K-Way/Cape Union Mart gear review

I do a lot of exploring of national parks and reserves in remote parts of Africa, and my Garmin GPS and Tracks4Africa mapping software are indispensable. They are an essential part of my work, and if you are planning a 4x4 trip on the continent – anywhere between the Cape and Cairo or Senegal and Somalia, then make sure you have these very useful items.

Tracks4Africa is a huge data set of waypoints, tracks and routes, collated over the past 15 years by more than 500 overlanders who travelled the length and breadth of Africa. When you buy the software, you receive an SD card with more than 900 000km of roads and jeep tracks, which slots into your GPS (in my case, an Oregon 550).

A lot of the data concerns remote areas, so it's very useful in places where normal roads are not properly mapped in mapbooks or standard GPS software.

Tracks4Africa also has mapping of more than 1400 protected areas, as well as 3645 campsites, so if you are looking for a place to camp, you can easily find one.

Buy Tracks4Africa (R799) online or in a Cape Union Mart store www.capeunionmart.co.za.



Scott Ramsay

Scott Ramsay is a photo-journalist focusing on national parks and nature reserves in Africa. He is supported by Cape Union Mart as a K-Way ambassador, and also by Ford, Goodyear Wrangler, Safari Centre Cape Town, Hetzner, Outdoor Photo and Tracks4Africa.

For more information, go to www.LoveWildAfrica.com, or www.facebook.com/LoveWildAfrica and @love_wild_africa on Instagram.



Guide to buying off-road gear

Acquiring gear for your off-roader may seem a daunting task, but Grant Spolander has a simple guide on the things you should look for first

Text and photography: Grant Spolander

Fifteen years ago the South African 4x4 industry was in its infancy. Back then, 4x4s were viewed as tools, not toys.

Before long an increasing number of vehicle manufacturers were adding 4x4s to their product line. At the same time, South African entrepreneurs caught on to the booming 4x4 industry in Australia, where massive product development was taking place in the accessory department.

Soon these products were making their way to SA, and the recreational off-road industry was born.

As the industry grew, more products came onto the market and innovation became the order of the day. In no time, the 4x4 game was burdened by its own bulk, creating the perception that off-road travel was expensive and only possible with truckloads of extra kit. It's no wonder that the line between what's needed and what's wanted got a little hazy at times.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to make life easier when you go off-road, particularly when you're on holiday. However, in the spirit of fundamentals and barebone off-roading, here's a must-have list for newbie off-roaders.

Tyres

You could argue that buying new tyres when your 4x4 already has a set is a waste of money, but nothing could be further from the truth. Tyres are your 4x4's most crucial component.

Perpetual punctures, blown sidewalls and a lack of traction are sure-fire ways to ruin

Tyres are your 4x4's most vital component, so fit the best you can afford and take good care of them by using an air compressor.



your off-road vacation. Bear in mind that tyre sidewall damage often occurs when you are trekking over mountainous terrain, or sharp rocks – not the ideal place to have to jack up a vehicle and change a wheel. So seek guidance on the type of tyres you need for the trips you have in mind.

Spade

Sure, an expensive 12 000lb winch will haul you out of most situations, but in terms of value for money, no recovery tool is as useful as a spade. (Strictly speaking, what you really need is a shovel – something with a deep dish that can hold lots of sand.)

Almost any recovery situation requires three things: a plan, patience, and good old-fashioned hard work. The moment you skip one of these you are in for a long and arduous process that's likely to get worse before it gets better.

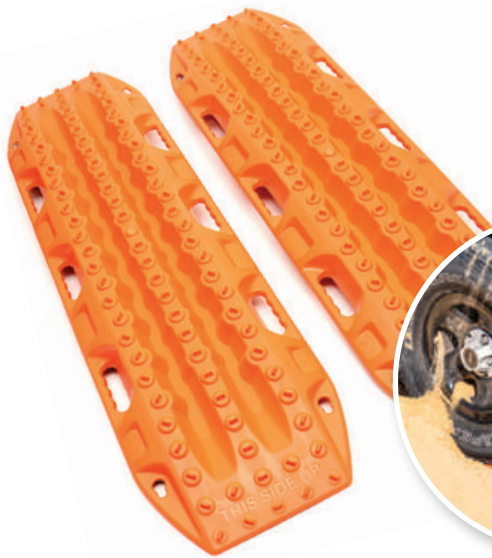
Sweat, blistered palms and a R300 shovel will see you through most off-road problems, but don't cut corners. When you get stuck, be sure you have removed (i.e. dug out) all obstructions from your vehicle's undercarriage before you attempt to move on. The rule is that you must see daylight under the full length of the chassis before you drive off. So, dig until you can't dig anymore, take a break, and dig some more. If you rush the process there's an excellent chance that you'll end up in an even worse situation.



Compressor and puncture repair kit

Every 4x4 owner who plans to explore the back roads should carry a 12V air compressor and a puncture repair kit. But before you head off to the hardware store to buy what looks like a fishpond pump, stop. What you need is a bona fide, heavy-duty air compressor that can deliver adequate pressure and volume.

If the unit looks as though it's made of plastic, the chances are that it's a light-duty, Christmas-cracker compressor that won't be



A recovery track must be firm enough to support the weight of your vehicle.



up to the task. Note also that air compressors that come standard in luxury sedans are designed to top up the air in one or two low-profile tyres, not to re-inflate four massive off-road tyres from 1.0 to 2.2 bar.

Recovery tracks


A good set of recovery tracks should be ridged, firm and able to support your vehicle's weight. Flexible, fold-up, roll-up, or fill-up recovery tracks are seldom good enough. They tend to sink under the weight of a hefty 4x4. You

need something that spreads your vehicle's weight and acts as a platform for it to climb onto. The moment it is able to lift itself out of a boggy situation, half the recovery work is done.

The important thing to remember about recovery tracks is that prevention is better than cure. In other words, don't wait to use them until the problem is there. If you see a potentially boggy situation, lie the tracks out before you get stuck. With this in mind, it's important to keep the recovery tracks easily accessible in your vehicle. Don't pack them under your camping gear.

High-lift jack

The high-lift jack has been around since the early 1900s. It is a tried-and-trusted tool with bullet-proof construction, and it's incredibly versatile. The jack can be used to lift a vehicle, change a tyre, shift a 4x4 sideways (tilt the jack over) or mechanically winch a 4x4 forwards or backwards – and that's just the start of its functionality.


Unfortunately, high-lift jacks are frequently regarded as dangerous tools to operate. While this may be true at some level, the truth is that when things go wrong it is usually because the operator has rushed the recovery process and failed to consider all the necessary safety measures beforehand. So practise the operation before you go on a trip and when the occasion arises, remember to take your time, think things through, and roll your sleeves up. 

The high-lift jack is the "Leatherman" of recovery tools, and no 4x4 should be without it.



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COOPERTIRES

4X4 TRAIL

HENNOPS 4X4 TRAIL, NORTH WEST

A Suzuki SJ clocks some air time on one of Hennops Off-road trail's easier obstacles.



Rocks on!

The 200ha Hennops Off-road trail may not be new but it is still one of the most popular venues in Gauteng. And if you have done the main trail 15 times, there is also the exclusive and tough Klipdrift route to try out

Text: Danie Botha **Photos:** Bridgestone SA

The Hennops Off-road trail is bit like a hypermarket of 4x4 trails – it offers something for virtually everyone.

The well-known main trail is rated between grade 2 and 4, so it caters for various levels of 4x4 and experience. The trail's only grade

5 obstacle has, in recent times, evolved into something a bit tamer. However, when in wet weather this challenge will become a whole different kettle of obstacles.

Good news for novice drivers and owners of stock 4x4s who don't want to dent their

chariots is that there are escape routes past or around all the worst challenges. Other tests include man-made dongas and ditches, mud holes and muddy water crossings.

A more exclusive and hardcore 4x4 option is the Klipdrift 4x4 trail. This track is very

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rocky, and the difficulty level can go up to grade five with some wet rocks in the game. It will take two to three hours to complete the track, and the owners won't allow groups of more than four vehicles at a time on the track.

Because the track is so tight and rocky, there are no escape routes here. Once you are on the track you have to follow it all the way through, and that includes having to deal with some rather nasty rocks. The owners also require groups to carry with them the necessary equipment and gear to perform their own recoveries.

If all else fails the staff will go and fetch you, but your wallet will be significantly lightened in the process. So best be well prepared.

Another Klipdrift trail pitfall is possible punctures. Drivers will have to figure out what the ideal pressure is to use, but if you deflate the tyres too low a rock is bound to damage a sidewall if you are not driving with your eyes wide open.

Harder tyres are less at risk of punctures, but also provide less traction on the rocks, so it's one of those conundrums that you will have to figure out.

Besides the 4x4 trails, the venue offers hiking and mountain bike trails. The MTB trail

THE FACTS

- **NAME:** Hennops Off-road trail
- **LOCATION:** Next to the R511 between the N14 highway and Broederstroom
- **GPS:** S25 degrees 47' 28,918' / E28 degrees 58' 48,464'
- **ACCOMMODATION:** Self-catering garden cottage and Hadedra hiker's huts with bunks
- **FOOD & BEVERAGES:** None
- **DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** 2/5
- **VEHICLE REQUIRED:** Low-range equipped 4x4 with good clearance. Diff lock(s) and/or traction control will be a bonus, but not essential. On the Klipdrift trail you need plenty of clearance and traction, so a 4x4 from the showroom floor won't be happy here
- **ROUTE LENGTH:** Main route about three hours, Klipdrift route also about three hours
- **4X4 TRAIL PRICES:** R200 per vehicle
- **SPECIAL TOUCHES:** Besides the option of accommodation, MTB and hiking trails, there are two 4x4 trails to choose from: the main one, and the more exclusive and challenging Klipdrift track. The venue is conveniently located – just far enough from the city to make you feel you are in the grammadoelas but close to all amenities
- **GOOD:** Some really tough challenges,



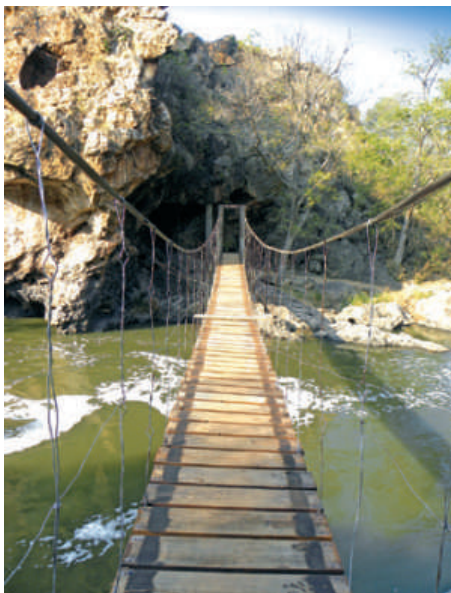
especially on the Klipdrift trail. Note that you need to make prior arrangements before being allowed to complete the Klipdrift section (it's on neighbouring farm)

■ **NOT SO GOOD:** It's a relatively short trail, but you get plenty of adrenaline pumping in that time. In the past there have been security issues. Though these seem to have been resolved, it's best go in a group of 4x4s rather than tackling it by yourself.

■ **VERDICT:** It's right on Pretoria and Johannesburg's doorstep, and it offers some tough 4x4 driving tests. The Klipdrift section caters for off-roaders who like their 4x4 action hard and tough.

■ **CONTACT:** Hubert at 082-825-9205 or e-mail hubert@hennops.co.za

■ **WEBSITE:** www.hennops.co.za; www.facebook.com/hennopsoffroad



The venue's famous suspension bridge, which is part of the hiking trail; the picnic spot at the main Hennops centre has two swimming pools and plenty of braai places; a Jeep Cherokee goes the rocky route. Some of the obstacles are rated at grade 4.



is 16km in length, and is said to take between one and two hours to complete. It is rated as a trail with average difficulty levels.

There are also two hiking trails and features are the river crossings via a suspension bridge and a cable car.

The trails take in several historic sites, including an old field hospital dating back to the Anglo Boer War.

And that's not all. There is also a famous and beautiful picnic spot, situated on the banks of the Hennops River. It was established in 1928, and there are two swimming pools, ablutions and braai sites for visitors. This spot is a few kilometres from the off-road trail, close to the overnight accommodation.

The main 4x4 trail does have its own picnic spot, too. It features braai areas and ablutions. If you don't feel like 4x4-ing you can get to the picnic spot on a service road. However, this road is not suitable for low-slung passenger cars.

That's the Hennops Off-road trail near Hartbeespoort Dam. It really is like the hypermarket of 4x4 trails, offering something for everyone. **LW**

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The Big Five to Big Blue Safari includes a visit to Lake Malawi.

►► For more information on any of these tours or to book your trip, contact Avril Muller well in advance on 021 530 3186 or avril@ramsaymedia.co.za

EASTERN CAPE HIGHLANDS

■ The Wild Side of the Drakensberg

2016: 27 April – 2 May, 15 – 20 Oct

The Eastern Cape Highlands, also known as “The Wild Side of the Drakensberg” is growing in popularity as a safe and un-commercialised mountain destination with spectacular scenery and challenging gravel Mountain Passes. The route includes Naudes Nek with a summit of over 2,920m above sea level, the Village of Rhodes and up with Carlislehoek Pass to Tiffindell Ski Resort. We will pass the highest point in the Cape (3,001m above sea level) known by local residents as BenMac named after the peak Ben McDhui in Scotland. The scenery is nothing short of spectacular Lundean’s Nek connecting this part of the Eastern Cape to the Lesotho border at Telebridge. The safari will be over 5 days and all the accommodation will be in the form of guesthouses and B&B’s.

▶▶ **R5 500 pp** (Subject to change)

NAMIBIA

■ Lüderitz to Walvis Bay

2016: 17 – 23 Aug, 14 – 20 Nov

Places visited on the way include Silvia Hill, Meob Bay, Conception Bay and Sandwich Bay. Desert wildlife, spectacular scenery, untouched beaches, abandoned mining settlements, miles of sand driving and shipwrecks are some of the attractions along the way.

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Exploring the central Namib – discover an untamed wilderness with beauty as unique and diverse as only the Namib can offer.

▶▶ **R8 500 pp**

PONDOLAND

■ Wildcoast

2016: 19-26 March, 3-10 September

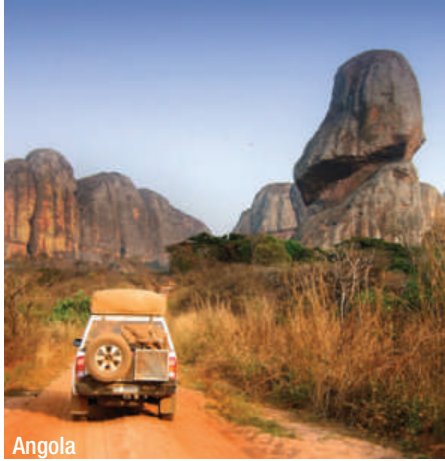
Pondoland, on the Transkei Wild Coast, is one of the destinations that so many people would like to visit, but know so little about, and do not want to go there on their own. Pondoland, is a land of wild cattle and wilder beauty, of waterfalls plunging directly into the Indian Ocean, of colonies of vultures nesting above undisturbed forest gorges, and a beautiful but rugged coastline which boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in Southern Africa.

▶▶ **R 5 400 pp** (subject to change).

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

2016: August/September. (3 weeks – final dates to be confirmed). Visiting the modern day ‘Dorsland Trekkers’ at Dolisie in the Republic of Congo. This promises to be unforgettable adventure via Angola, DRC (just crossing the western part), towards Cabinda and exploring the Republic of Congo? There are various exciting destinations with very little organised ‘self-drive tourism’. Go in search of the western mountain Gorillas.

▶▶ **Price on application.**



TANZANIA

■ Wildebeest Migration

2016: 18 July – 21 August

This safari offers a once-in-a lifetime experience – the beginning of the annual wildebeest migration in the Serengeti, also called the “Birth of Life”. There is also a visit to Lake Malawi and the Ngorongoro Crater. The journey leads us through Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana.

▶▶ **7 200 pp** (Guide fee only and subject to change)



ZAMBIA

■ Tanganyika Waterfall Route

2016: 10 June – 2 July

We believe in innovation and always want to offer something new and exciting, and Zambia also never fails to surprise. This safari takes you to the most spectacular waterfalls Zambia can offer. From the impressive Lumangwe falls to the smaller, but equally beautiful Chisimba – and Mutumuna falls, the route also includes the world’s longest freshwater, the second largest and second deepest lake, Lake Tanganyika.

▶▶ **R14 200 pp**

■ Liuwa Plains

2016: 7 – 19 November

This safari is a combination of the wildebeest migration in Liuwa Plains and the migration of the “Flying Foxes” or straw coloured fruit bats in Kasanka National Park. Few people have ventured into the Liuwa Plain due to its relative inaccessibility. However the prolific birdlife, the wildebeest migration and the story of Lady Liuwa, the “last lioness”, makes it one of Africa’s last true wildernesses and a huge attraction to the bush fundi. During this time of year five million straw-coloured fruit bats also take up residence in one hectare of Kasanka National Park’s Mushitu swamp forest. This is a spectacle not to be missed and one of Africa’s greatest wildlife spectacles, if not the world’s.

▶▶ **R11 100 pp** (subject to change)

■ Zambia with Zest

2016: 29 August – 20 September

Zambia is one of the undiscovered gems of Africa and this safari will take you to its hidden places. They include South Luangwa, Luambe, North Luangwa, Kapishya Hot Springs, and the North and South of Kafue. And, of course, there is also a visit to a world-famous natural wonder – the Victoria Falls.

▶▶ **R19 800 pp** (subject to change).

ZIMBABWE

■ Cross-country expedition

2016: 20 May- 2 June

This safari allows you to experience all facets of Zimbabwe – from camping on the banks of the Zambezi to the luxury chalets at Troutbeck Inn in the Eastern Highlands. The itinerary includes the Matopos, Hwange National Park, a ferry crossing on Lake Kariba, the Mana Pools, Harare, Nyanga National Park in the Eastern Highlands and the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

▶▶ **R16 900 pp** (subject to change).



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VOETSPORE DIARY

With Johan
Badenhorst

THE
PERFECT DAY

Some times are better than others

Johan is used to having “a good day at the office”, but 2 November 2015 will be remembered as one of the best

Very few days on a Voetspore adventure cannot be described as a perfect day. We are blessed to have had the opportunity to criss-cross Africa in four-wheel drive vehicles, exploring, observing and enjoying the experience for the past 15 years. And yet, few days can rival 2 November 2015 – day 54 of our expedition, Voetspore in Madagascar.

We had arrived the previous evening on the banks of the Menarandra River on the south-east coast of the island after a long sand track drive from Anakao.

The vegetation was interesting – a few baobabs, pachypodium and spiny forest, as well as the invading cactus. We were heading for Cap Saint Marie, the southern-most point of Madagascar.

There were two rivers to cross – the Linta and the Menarandra. Crossing the Linta was a simple matter because it was dry. The Menarandra was not. Actually, it was in flood after heavy rains

upstream.

André Bester, one of our team, offered to walk through to test what the conditions were like. He did not even get halfway before turning around. “Impossible,” he said. “It’s getting deeper and deeper.”

As the water was muddy and the rocks were slimy, we decided not to attempt a crossing, but rather to set up camp on the river bank. We would decide what to do the next day, 2 November.

I woke up early. From my vantage point in my rooftop tent I had a view of the river. It didn’t look good. Before sunrise a small crowd had assembled at our camp. The people were from the village nearby. They had seen us arrive the previous evening and were curious about our next step. One guy asked for pain killers for a tooth ache, but he also had some news. According to him, the river level had dropped during the night by about one metre.

We packed up and went down to the river. At the point where

most people cross in their zebu carts, it was still impossible. Too deep. Too slimy. And the riverbed was uneven.

I looked upstream and saw a cart crossing the river. The zebu (a humped ox) can swim and the cart is light, but I noticed that the water was only about a metre deep – at the most a metre-and-a-half.

André offered to walk across again. This time he went all the way to the other side, but he came back with the same opinion: “It’s not possible – too muddy, too uneven.” And in places the water was more than one-and-a-half metres deep.

While we were discussing our predicament, a local lady approached us. She did not utter a word or make any sounds, but gave firm hand signals and gestures with her head. “Go further upstream,” she seemed to be saying. “There is a point where you can cross.” Somehow she commanded authority.

So we went upstream. By now

a crowd of more than 100 was following our every move.

André crossed the river once more on foot. “It may be possible,” he reported.

We started our preparations. The river was too wide to attach a rope to a vehicle when crossing. We connected all our snatch ropes to make one giant rope of about 30m long. This we attached to the bridle at the back of my car. Should I get stuck, one of the other vehicles would have to recover me, most probably from within the river. But we had no other choice.

The silent lady stood on the rockslide at my door. I entered the water. She indicated that I should drive upstream. I was constantly veering off to the other side, but she was persistent – go upstream. Then, at one point, she indicated with her hand, turn right. Cross the river. So I did.

Halfway through the crossing the scarf she had tied around her waist was swept off. She jumped into the water to retrieve it. She

Johan Badenhorst, André Bester, Gideon Swart and Simon Wearne’s crossing of the Menarandra in Madagascar drew a fairly sizeable crowd.





Left: The friendly local, who Gideon had gifted with a snorkel and goggles, has given the team a chicken in return. Below: Johan and his team also spent a few challenging, yet satisfying hours in the dunes.

left me by myself! Now it was me, a V8 and four Mickey Thompsons, but the Cruiser's engine roared. I was in third gear, low range with both front and rear diff locks activated. In front of the bonnet there was a perfect wave.

The Cruiser rocked to and fro, sometimes into a hole, a metre-and-a-half deep, yet I went forward. I reached the other side to great applause from the crowd.

Then it was the turn of Gideon Swart and Simon Wearne, our other two drivers. They had the benefit of knowing which line I had taken – the line shown to me by the silent lady. It was challenging, but they made it across safely.

We left the crowd behind and followed the zebu cart trails further south. Whenever we saw a local man or woman we asked, "Lavanono?" At one point a man who could speak a little French and a few words of English indicated that we should drive for some distance on the beach and through the dunes. He offered to guide us to that point – an offer we gratefully accepted.

On arriving at the dunes we gave him a bottle of water, a South African flag and some money. He turned back, and we continued driving south.

Simon is a guide in the Namib. Now he was in a mini Namib. It was fantastic. Dunes with slip faces. Challenging, yet satisfying. A few hours in the desert.


A rocky peninsula ran into the sea. We had to go inland. Once more we had to look for zebu cart tracks. They were narrower than the Cruisers. The branches of the spiny forest and cacti scratched the vehicles but we had no choice. There was no other way.

We reached a rocky mountain pass. The Cruisers, in low range, with their Mickey Thompsons, climbed it like a charm. Then we had to go down another, very narrow pass. Just after two in the afternoon we reached Lavanono.



Some of us went for a swim, but Simon went surfing. A young lad walked past with a crude handmade spear gun from which he made a living and fed his family. Gideon asked him if he had goggles and a snorkel. He did not understand the question, so Gideon fetched his state of the art set and gave it to the boy. Gideon said he wasn't going to use them for the rest of the trip, and the boy could put them to much better use. The youngster smiled shyly and said "Merci."

An hour later the boy returned with a lady and two other boys. They said something like "cadeau" – the French for gift. We had become used to people asking for "cadeaux". But they were not asking. They were bringing. The boy and his family, who were among the poorest people we have met, brought Gideon a chicken as a gift, to say thank you for the goggles and snorkel.

This was a perfect day. When the sun set over the Mozambique Channel we had a whole fish, flavoured with garlic and lemon, on the coals. It was served on a bed of rice with a crisp Guardian Peak sauvignon blanc. 



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PART PROBLEMS

The dangers of borrowing something

When you have two similar cars that need different spares, it would be only too easy to use parts from one to fix the other. According to Francois, that's not a good idea

At the moment we have so many different vehicle models in SA that some only get a small share of the market. This makes it difficult for the manufacturers to carry a big range of spare parts for every model. Our country is so big that it is not always easy to obtain a part for a repair.

I worked for a transport company years ago and we had a fleet of similar trucks. When a vehicle was down with a mechanical breakdown and another one needed a part, it would have been easy to quickly "borrow" the part from the stricken truck, but our boss point-blank refused to allow it, even if it meant a truck had to stand for a day or two while waiting for the part.

I could not understand his conservative attitude. But recently I saw to what extent the "borrowing" of a part could affect a company.

On various occasions, I have seen a tractor on a farm that had a small problem and was standing, waiting for a part, being stripped when a similar vehicle needed a part. It was quicker and easier than driving into town to get the part. Six months later, when harvest time came, it cost a fortune to get the tractor going again, replacing all the savaged parts.

Recently, I witnessed a more extreme situation. A company in the Eastern Cape had a fleet of similar vehicles working in the forests. One vehicle had an engine problem and while they were fighting with the agents on whether it was a factory claim or not, another one needed a battery.

The battery from the broken bakkie was borrowed, and when another vehicle had two punctures on the same day, the spare wheel of the stricken vehicle was taken for the other one. Later the rear axle was "borrowed", and so it carried on. Whenever a part was needed, it was taken from the broken vehicle. Eventually there was very little left of the donor vehicle and it was completely uneconomical to repair.

The big problem came when the bank enquired about the arrears on the lease of the savaged vehicle.

There was very little left of it. No engine, gearbox, axles or lights. There was just a shell that

was not worth repossessing. The only way out for the company was to carry on paying the instalments for another four years on a vehicle that by now was just a skeleton. Alternatively, they faced a court case for stripping the assets that were in fact security for the bank.

It is tough to pay an instalment and licence fee for a vehicle that, in reality, does not exist. It also cannot be sold. It is just a liability. If the spares for the other vehicles had been bought when needed, the company would not have ended up in this situation.

It is dangerous to strip a vehicle for spares. I remember taking the spare wheel from one of my trailers for another trailer.

I completely forgot about it and six months later when I used the trailer, I did not even remember that there was no spare wheel.

We were lucky not to get a puncture on that trip and it was only when I pumped the tyres for the next trip that I noticed that the spare wasn't there. A trailer with a puncture and no spare is a serious problem. You cannot leave the trailer on the roadside and you cannot tow it. To obtain a rim and tyre that will fit is very difficult, especially in remote country areas.

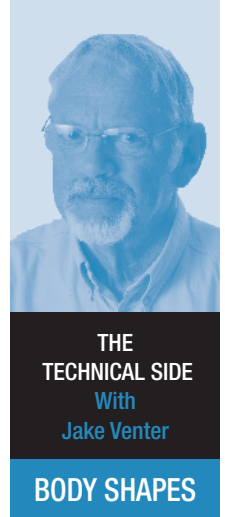
This is a lesson for all of us. Don't raid a vehicle or trailer for emergency spares. The practice soon escalates and becomes a serious problem. **LW**



It starts off with something small, such as a headlamp from an out-of-action bakkie, but if you get into the habit of "borrowing" parts, donor vehicles will soon end up as empty shells.

Why are there so many ugly cars?

Why are many modern cars so ugly? It's all about the drag, says Jake Venter



In the old days, one of the hallmarks of a really outstanding off-road vehicle was that the body was shaped by practical considerations. Vehicles such as the early Jeep, and even the later Land Rover Defenders and Mercedes-Benz Gelandewagens, had a timeless beauty because every part of the body was shaped to perform its function rather than just look pretty.

At present, the search for ways and means to reduce fuel consumption has resulted in body shapes whose most important feature is a low drag coefficient and a small frontal area. The grille is often just an air passage covered in a few ugly chrome strips, to make you think the company actually employed a stylist.

These modern shapes are also practical, but in a very different way. For example, the improvement in aerodynamic drag has resulted in a modern five-litre V8 using the same amount of fuel at 100 km/h as a 1,5-litre four-cylinder engine used 30 years ago.

The increased slipperiness of modern cars has made it possible to employ a high top gear ratio. This not only means that less power is needed to maintain a steady speed, but that speed can be achieved at lower engine revs.

The nature of drag

Some of the power reaching the driving wheels is used to overcome a small amount of friction drag between the tyres and the road, but most of the power by far is absorbed by the aerodynamic drag. This is the force that resists motion and is

created by the car's movement through the air. It grows as the square of the vehicle speed, meaning that every time the car's speed is doubled the air resistance is multiplied by a factor of four.

A car can only accelerate while the engine's power exceeds the

The test section has to be instrumented in such a way that the true forces acting on the car can be measured. When the test involves a scale model, an arm is often used to locate the model, and the forces acting on the arm are then measured. If a full-size



A wind tunnel shows the difference in aero-dynamics between a vehicle with a rounded front and one with a boxy grille.

power absorbed by the sum of the above two drags. The moment the engine's power is equal to the total drag, acceleration will stop and the car will have achieved its maximum speed.

The numerical value of the aerodynamic drag is the product obtained when one-half of the air density is multiplied by the frontal area of the vehicle, the drag coefficient and the square of the vehicle speed.

Measuring the drag coefficient

This coefficient is a shape factor and will have a desirable low value if the car body is smooth. It is usually determined in a wind tunnel, where the same air is circulated around inside a huge smooth-cornered rectangle and the air temperature and humidity can be controlled.

car is being tested, each wheel rests on a measuring pad, which in a modern tunnel is able to measure not only the rearwards drag, but also the magnitude and direction of any vertical, or even sideways forces on the wheels. In some tunnels, the car can also be angled to the wind so that the effect of gusts from the side can be studied.

Pioneers in the aerodynamic field were forced to use scale models, because the first full-scale tunnels were only built in the mid-1930s. At present there are enough big tunnels around for most manufacturers to test full-scale cars, and most of them do.

Scale models are still being used, either to save cost in the early stages of a car's development, or because some sophisticated new technique can be tried only in a small tunnel.

Flow visualisation


This has always been a problem. In the early days, tufts of wool were taped to a car, and this technique is still being used. However, it is being supplemented by a stream of smoke lines, or unexpanded polystyrene balls, or the inspection of a deliberately dirtied car under ultraviolet light.

Another technique is to test a scale model in a water tunnel where an electric current generates regularly spaced hydrogen bubbles that make the flow underneath the car and in the wheel housings more visible.

Modern shapes

Most modern companies either own wind tunnels or are able to use tunnels at some research organisation. The result is that some of the latest German models have drag coefficients between 0,26 and 0,3, and many others have coefficients not much over 0,3.

Techniques for designing the main body shapes are well established, and the attention has now shifted to optimising the smaller details. The latest cars have side mirrors that not only generate little noise but also help to keep the side windows clean. Sunroofs have a notched wind deflector to reduce noise.

Wheel arches have received much attention because they can generate a lot of turbulence. Subtle spoilers on the boot lid keep rear-end lift within narrow limits. The grille and front apron are designed to direct air smoothly over and around the body. 



ROAD SAFETY
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TRAVEL TIPS

Be prepared, polite and patient

By the time you read this, you will probably be on your annual holiday pilgrimage. Ashref Ismail shares a few road safety tips to ensure that your travelling is not marred by an avoidable breakdown or disastrous crash

So you have serviced your car, checked your vehicle's roadworthiness, double checked the spare, jack, spanners and tool kit, and packed a first aid kit. If you are towing a caravan or trailer, you have checked its brakes and tyres, as well as the towing equipment and electrical connections.

Perhaps – because you are a *Leisure Wheels* reader – you have opted to stay off the beaten track and explore the quieter, more scenic back routes.

It would be a good idea to consult the AA or local tourist information websites to acquaint yourself with road conditions if you are venturing off the major routes. If you are planning on travelling along the national roads

you can get regular traffic reports about them on social media websites and radio stations.

If you are going to be covering a lot of gravel it is always a good idea to carry an air compressor and a puncture repair kit. Check that your navigation system correctly picks up the destination co-ordinates, and don't forget to carry car chargers for your mobile devices.

Of course, the summer holiday period is an extended peak traffic flow season in southern Africa, so there will be lots of cars on the roads with breakdowns and, sadly, crashes along all major routes. Also expect delays at toll gates and border crossings, not to mention stop-go hold-ups at construction sites.

Factor in these inevitable delays when planning your trip. Take along bags of patience and make sufficient rest stops to help eliminate potential road rage.

Traffic law enforcement is at its peak at this time, and roadblocks will be commonplace. Make sure that you have your driver's licence handy and, whatever you do, do not have "one for the road".

It is estimated that 65% of all crashes during holiday seasons involve the abuse of alcohol, either by drivers or pedestrians, who wander into the road. Alcohol affects your observation, concentration, perception and reaction. It also impairs your driving skills, mood and behaviour. Random breath testing, especially in the metropolitan areas, are

a reality and you just don't want to wreck your holiday because you have over-indulged.

Fixed speed cameras are installed along national routes. If your GPS device is able to pick them up, it will save you lots of money and hassles, but remember that traffic police are also adept at using mobile cameras at places where you would least expect them. On the N3 to Durban, certain sections have average speed

timing camera enforcement, so use cruise control if you have it.

When setting off on a long trip, don't leave too early or travel at night as road hazards such as pedestrians, stray animals, potholes, unroadworthy and overloaded vehicles are all too common. Your own fatigue is a hazard in itself.

It's a good idea to maintain a three second following gap between you and the car in front of you. Increase this distance during adverse conditions and inclement weather.

Drive smoothly and gently, looking far ahead and planning your position, speed and gear changes accordingly. This will reduce fuel consumption, stress and unnecessary wear and tear on your vehicle.

"Keep left, pass right", don't tail-gate and don't cut-in in front of cars. Nothing infuriates drivers more than a road hog who doesn't signal correctly and generally drives without consideration for other road users.

Finally, remember that many traffic officers, policemen, ambulance and emergency service personnel, along with hundreds of volunteers, have sacrificed time away from their families to help you reach your destination safely. The public road is a shared space, so behave accordingly, and show some appreciation by giving a friendly hoot and a wave to the people guiding you on your way.

Enjoy your well-deserved break, buckle up at all times and come back safely! **LW**



This is the kind of scene you'll see often this summer. Why not just sit back, relax and wait your turn? It is the holidays, after all.

Buy the right 4x4 for you

There is an abundance of off-road vehicles out there and finding the right one for you could be daunting. Glyn Demmer offers a few tips for first-timers



TRAVEL TIPS
With
Glyn Demmer

SHOPPING
TIPS FOR
NEWBIES

New entrants to the fun of off-roading are affectionately referred to as “newbies” by the old hands. That is where they should gather information – from the older, more seasoned travellers – both before and after buying a vehicle.

Generally, the fraternity gives good advice in their assessment of a newcomer’s needs, but there is still some miscommunication and you occasionally come across a new owner who has bought a vehicle that is totally unsuited to his requirements.

After all, the 4x4 is the “enabler” that allows one to get out there and explore the outdoors in a safe, comfortable and environmentally friendly way.

I am going to touch on a few points to consider when you go looking for a 4x4, using the acronym, SPACED.

Safety

This is an important consideration and you should consider both the active and passive systems at your disposal. SA’s road safety statistics are appalling, so these

items are critical in helping drivers to avoid accidents. The focus is on control through good steering and braking, and active systems include things like brake assist, ABS, brake distribution, traction control and vehicle dynamic control, or VDC. The “passive” features are the secondary systems that assist in the event of an accident, such as airbags, safety cells, crumple zones and side impact bars.

Performance

Here one would consider various options such as petrol versus diesel, taking into account the availability of low sulphur diesel fuel across our borders. Towing capacity becomes important if you want to tow a boat, caravan or trailer. You should also consider the extent to which the vehicle will be used off road and whether, for instance, a crossover vehicle would suit your needs better than a hardcore 4x4 with low range gearing.

Appearance

This comes down to your

personal preferences. Do you like a boxy shape for your off-roader or the more rounded, aerodynamic look? Would a shiny metallic paint job stand up to the bush, or should you opt for a flat colour? Would the type and shape of the vehicle allow for the fitment of the accessories you require?

Comfort

On-road comfort and handling are important. Do you go for a rigid suspension combination or do you opt for a softer ride? Remember, this decision should be influenced by the amount and type of off-roading you want to do.

Do you need a seven-seater; is there enough interior space and are the seats comfortable enough for a long trip? These are just some of the questions you need to ask.

Evaluate the position and accessibility of the controls as well. Check the driving/steering position. You are going to spend a lot of time behind the wheel!

Economy

This is possibly the most important factor of all. You might

be able to afford the vehicle, but look at the other factors in terms of the total cost of ownership – insurance, maintenance, warranty, on- and off-road fuel costs – so that you can be sure the purchase is viable. Also, at the time of purchase, factor in the accessories you will need as they can be fitted and financed at the same time.

Durability

Will the car meet your needs and go the distance, and will parts be readily available in the event of a breakdown?

Ensure adequate insurance cover, especially if you travel across borders.

Ascertain that any accessories you intend fitting are approved by the manufacturer in terms of the vehicle warranty. This is critical, as an expensive claim could be repudiated should the accessories be non-compliant.

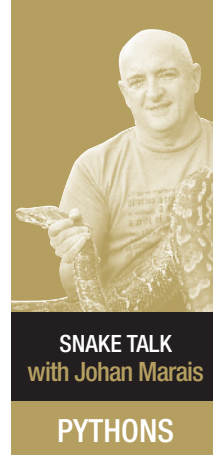
This list is by no means exhaustive, but I hope these few tips will be helpful to anyone planning to join the off-road fraternity. **LW**



With so many different varieties of SUV and 4x4 available these days, it's best to shop around and find the right one for you.

Mildly venomous, but dangerous

The vast majority of snakes in southern Africa are either harmless or mildly venomous. Johan writes about the possible effects of “mild” venom



While the venom of most mildly venomous snakes, such as the herald snake, the eastern tiger snake, various sand and grass snakes and the skaapsteker, have virtually no effect on humans, 29 snakes that are not considered deadly have rather potent venom that can cause a great deal of discomfort or even require hospital treatment. Unfortunately, many of these snakes are listed as “mildly venomous” on various internet sites. This is certainly not always the case.

The common or rhombic night adder is a good example. It is abundant in the wetter, eastern parts of the country and is a frog specialist, feeding largely on toads. Gardens with water features lure frogs, and the night adder follows.

The night adder’s venom is often described as mildly cytotoxic, which will cause some pain and a bit of swelling. This may be the case in some bites, but not always.

We see some particularly bad bites, especially on children and dogs. Night adder venom is potent enough to kill small dogs and I recently encountered a case where a Maltese poodle was bitten on a paw, and the front leg had to be amputated the next day.

In some areas, such as the Eastern Cape, night adder bites are common and children may end up with severe swelling and in rare cases, tissue damage. There is no anti-venom for this bite and doctors can only treat symptoms with pain killers.

Little can be done for the swelling. Swelling on an arm or leg can be severe enough to cause compartment syndrome – a condition where oxygenated blood does not reach the hand or foot. Though seldom required, this may necessitate a fasciotomy – a medical procedure in which the arm or leg is cut open longitudinally to relieve pressure on the veins.

The stiletto snake, previously called the burrowing adder, is responsible for a high number of painful snakebites. It is most active at night after summer rains, and most victims are bitten when they accidentally stand on one.

Because of its rather strange, hinged fangs that can protrude from the mouth independently, snake handlers are at risk because the stiletto cannot be held safely

behind the head. The snake will extend one fang and turn its head sideways to inflict a bite -- with painful results.

The venom is potently cytotoxic, causing tissue damage and in many cases results in the loss of a finger. To date we have not had any fatal bites in SA, but there have been deaths from stiletto snakes elsewhere in Africa. There is no anti-venom for this snake and treatment could take a few days or even weeks. Most stiletto snakes are 30cm-40cm in length, but may exceed 75cm. A bite from a large stiletto could be fatal.

Bites from the berg adder have been very serious and there have been cases where victims have spent weeks on a ventilator, or have lost their vision for months. Berg adder venom is a strange mixture of cytotoxins and neurotoxins, and the polyvalent anti-venom

does not work against it.


Some popular books refer to fatalities, but there are no well documented cases. Having said that, a fatal bite from a large berg adder is a possibility. It is an ill-tempered snake that often basks on footpaths or on rocky ledges in mountainous areas. If you step close enough or accidentally place a hand close to a basking berg adder, it may just strike out.

Other lesser-venomous snakes worth avoiding are the many-horned adder, the horned adder, the desert mountain adder, the coral shield cobra and the speckled shield cobra. Some of their bites may be extremely painful and others may result in respiratory distress that could be life threatening.

Small adder bites often cause severe local swelling with a lot of pain, and recovery takes a week or two.

The majority of snakebites in southern Africa result in pain, swelling and tissue damage, but such bites are seldom fatal. Bites in this category may be caused by snakes such as the Mozambique spitting cobra, puff adder, stiletto and night adder.

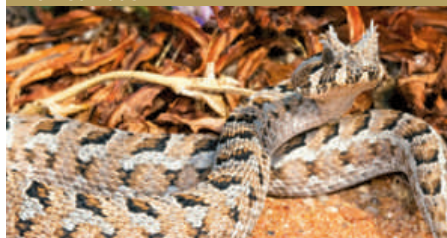
Bites from mambas and cobras, especially the black mamba and Cape cobra, cause progressive weakness and paralyse the chest muscles, which affects breathing, and these are the dangerous bites. The onset of symptoms may be rapid and a lack of oxygen soon results in death.

The most important first aid procedure in any snakebite is to immobilise the patient and organise rapid but safe transport to the nearest trauma unit. For people who live far from medical centres, it may be worthwhile investing in a bag valve mask and undergoing the necessary training in its use. If you are hours away from a trauma unit and have to deal with a serious mamba or cobra bite, a bag valve mask, properly used, could mean the difference between life and death. 

Leisure Wheels readers are welcome to contact me about snake awareness and venomous snake handling courses. For more information, email me at: johan@africansnakebiteinstitute.com



Horned Adder



Many-horned Adder



Stiletto Snake

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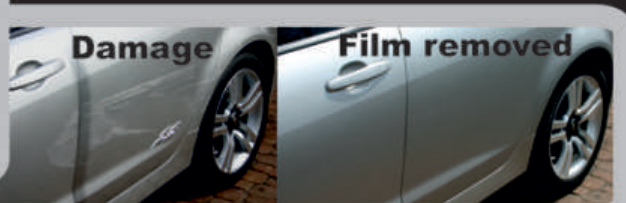
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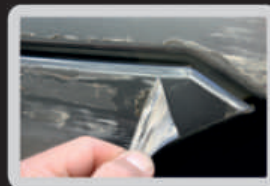


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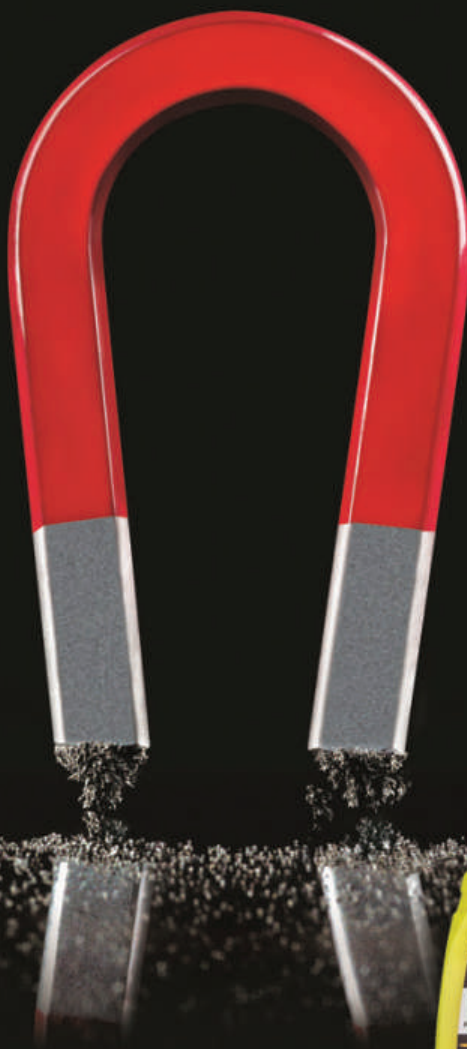


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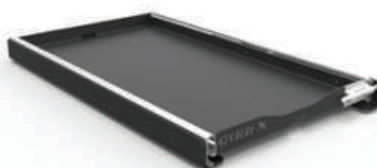
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Q3 / RS Q3	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.4T S	410 500	4/1.4T	110/5000	250/1500	5.5
1.4T S auto	428 000	4/1.4T	110/5000	250/1500	5.8
2.0T quattro	509 000	4/2.0T	132/4000	320/1400	6.5
2.0TDI quattro	525 500	4/2.0TD	135/3500	380/1800	5.3
RS Q3 quattro	769 500	5/2.5T	250/5300	450/1600	8.4

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 64 litres. **Average sales per month:** 76

» The Q3 is trendy, modern and – in typical Audi fashion – very well put together. The ride is sporty yet wonderfully comfortable and luxurious. It's not an off-roader, but it can deal with gravel tracks. We reckon that, as an overall package, this "Q" may be the best of the lot. Pricing is reasonably competitive, but the optional extra list will certainly add a lot more rands to the deal. **LW choice:** 2.0TDI quattro. **Also look at:** BMW X1, MINI Countryman, Mercedes-Benz GLA, Jeep Renegade, Subaru XV



A4 ALLROAD	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
allroad 2.0T	536 500	4/2.0T	165/4300	350/1500	7.0
allroad 2.0TDI	542 000	4/2.0TD	130/4200	380/1750	6.0

Maintenance plan: 5 years/100 000 km

Fuel tank: 61 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a

» More station wagon than SUV, the Allroad is a great option for those looking for something low-slung and nimble, but still (reasonably) rugged and spacious. The A4 isn't going to tackle any serious trails, but it can handle a dirt road, and it looks pretty funky with its black cladding. This is not a 4x4 in the traditional sense, but it is a great family vehicle. Perfect for those weekend visits to the farm! **LW choice:** 2.0 TDI. **Also look at:** Subaru Outback, Volvo V60 Cross Country / XC70



Q5 / SQ5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0T S quattro	570 000	4/2.0T	132/4000	320/1500	7.5
2.0TDI S quattro auto	593 500	4/2.0TD	130/4200	380/1750	6.0
2.0T SE quattro	648 500	4/2.0T	165/4500	350/1500	7.9
3.0T SE quattro	737 000	V6/3.0S	200/4750	400/2500	8.5
3.0TDI SE quattro	757 000	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	580/1750	6.4
SQ5 TDI quattro	884 500	V6/3.0TD	230/3900	650/1450	6.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years/100 000 km

Fuel tank: 75 litres. **Average sales per month:** 80

» Designed to fill the gap between the massive Q7 and the Q3, the Q5 is a dazzling piece of niche engineering. A highly aspirational vehicle, with the (very) few weak points far outweighed by the great ones. The turbocharged petrol engines are outstanding. **LW choice:** 2.0T quattro. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, BMW X3, Mercedes GLC, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Porsche Macan, Lexus NX, Volvo XC60



Q7	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0T quattro	872 000	4/2.0T	185/5000	370/1600	n/a
3.0TDI quattro	924 000	V6/3.0TD	183/2900	600/1500	5.7

Maintenance plan: 5 years/100 000 km

Fuel tank: 75 litres **Average sales per month:** 127

» The all-new Q7 is large and proud of it. It weighs significantly less than the old car and it makes use of a new and powerful 3.0-litre turbodiesel. It's nice to drive on the road and a fairly capable car off it. Its party piece is the way it just irons out a badly corrugated road. If it's comfort you're after, look no further. **LW choice:** 3.0TDI Quattro. **Also look at:** BMW X5, Mercedes GLE, Volvo XC90, Range Rover Sport



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X1	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
sDrive18i	435 000	3/1.5T	100/4400	220/1250	5.1
sDrive18i auto	452 810	3/1.5T	100/4400	220/1250	5.3
sDrive20i auto	493 642	4/2.0T	141/5000	280/1250	5.9
sDrive20d	479 500	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	4.5
sDrive20d auto	498 400	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	4.5
xDrive20i auto	542 168	4/2.0T	141/5000	280/1250	6.3
xDrive20d auto	558 321	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	4.9
xDrive25i auto	605 475	4/2.0T	170/5000	350/1250	6.4

Service plan: 5 years/100 000km.

Fuel tank: 61 litres. **Average sales per month:** New

» The new X1 is a massive upgrade on the previous model. The awkward exterior has been replaced by something far better looking. The engine line-up is decent and the performance figures impress. It should be more than capable on the average dirt road. **LW choice:** Not driven yet. **Also look at:** Audi Q3, Mercedes-Benz GLA / GLC



X3	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive20i	548 938	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	7.4
xDrive20i auto	566 607	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.9
xDrive20d	578 629	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	5.0
xDrive28i	648 809	4/2.0T	180/5000	400/1750	7.0
xDrive30d	733 975	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/2000	5.7
xDrive35i	758 990	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.3

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 67 litres. **Average sales per month:** 103

» The X3 is (reasonably) big, fast, smart and all-round way better than the original X3. Especially driver-type drivers will love the way the X3 handles, and feels. And with up to 225 kW of power, it's fast enough too! It still doesn't like 4x4 driving. On gravel roads, in mud and sand, the powerful new X3 is quite capable, though. Run-flat tyres and off-road terrain, however, don't like each other at all. **LW choice:** xDrive20i. **Also look at:** Mercedes GLC, Audi Q5, Infiniti QX50, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Lexus NX, Porsche Macan, Volvo XC60



X4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive20i	661 707	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.9
xDrive20d	664 629	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	5.0
xDrive28i	725 809	4/2.0T	180/5000	350/1250	7.0
xDrive30d	811 475	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/1500	5.7
xDrive35i	820 990	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.3

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 74 litres. **Average sales per month:** 63

» BMW's rather unusual X6 SUV/coupe has received a smaller sibling in the form of the X4. Like the X3 is a more compact version of the X5, the X4 takes the design of the X6, and places it into a more compact package. It has AWD, but isn't really designed for off-road driving. The X4 is made for tar roads, combining the feel of a coupe with the ride height of an SUV. **LW choice:** xDrive30d. **Also look at:** Land Rover Range Rover Evoque, Porsche Macan, Lexus NX



X5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive35i	912 400	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.5
xDrive30d	925 694	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/1500	5.9
xDrive40d	1 045 296	6/3.0TD	230/4400	630/1500	6.0
xDrive50i	1 157 670	V8/4.4T	330/5500	650/2000	9.6
M50d	1 215 438	6/3.0TD	280/4000	740/2000	6.6
X5 M	1 722 659	V8/4.4T	423/6000	750/2200	11.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000km

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 128

» BMW has not strayed too far from its winning SUV formula. The X5 remains an elegant and sporty SUV, and continues to lead the segment. **LW choice:** xDrive30d. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, Mercedes-Benz/-AMG GLE, Infiniti QX70, Porsche Cayenne, Land Rover Range Rover Sport, Volvo XC90



X6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive35i	993 503	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.5
xDrive40d	1 098 912	6/3.0TD	230/4400	630/1500	6.2
xDrive50i	1 220 273	V8/4.4T	330/5500	650/2000	9.7
M50d	1 385 540	6/3.0TD	280/4000	740/2000	6.6
X6 M	1 757 659	V8/4.4T	423/6000	750/2200	11.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel**

tank: 85 litres. **Average sales per month:** 38

» As the even sportier sibling of the X5, the X6 attempts to marry the sleek, sporty design of a coupe with the large frame of an SUV. Is it successful? We'll leave it up to you to decide, but the vehicle undoubtedly has a lot of presence on the road. **LW Choice:** M50d, if you can afford it. **Also look at:** Mercedes-Benz/-AMG GLE Coupé, Porsche Cayenne, Land Rover Range Rover Sport



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CAPTIVA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 LT	370 200	4/2.4	123/5600	230/4600	8.8
2.4 LT auto	387 900	4/2.4	123/5600	230/4600	8.8
2.2D LT	402 600	4/2.2TD	135/3800	400/2000	7.9

Service plan: 3 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 65 litres.

Average sales per month: 110. >> The Captiva has been a very good seller in its class. It's a good, honest package, offering quite a bit of car for the money. It even has seven seats, and an adult can actually sit in the last row without any ill-effects. The interior is loaded with standard kit – making the package all the more attractive. Sure, it has an electronic 4x4 system, but it doesn't like tackling dongas. **LW choice:** 2.4 LT. **Also look at:** Hyundai ix35, Kia Sportage, Nissan X-Trail, Subaru Forester



TRAILBLAZER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5D LT	439 300	4/2.5TD	120/3600	380/2000	7.4
2.8D LTZ auto	518 700	4/2.8TD	144/3600	500/2000	9.5
2.8D 4x4 LTZ	556 700	4/2.8TD	144/3600	440/2000	8.0
2.8D 4x4 LTZ auto	575 500	4/2.8TD	144/3600	500/2000	9.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:**

76 litres **Average sales per month:** 56 >> The Trailblazer is probably the closest thing to a real rival the Toyota Fortuner has ever encountered. Based on the underpinnings of the sixth-generation Isuzu KB, and boasting a raft of new tech, safety, awesome packaging and powerful and modern new engines, the Blazer has – on paper – all that it takes to trump the Fortuner. Except a Toyota badge, that is. The 4x4 Trailblazer models have a part-time transfer case with 2H, 4H and 4LOW settings. Ample ground clearance combined with a range of electronic driving aids, and overall the Trailblazer is a pretty mean off-roader. However, the lack of a rear differential lock could be its undoing. **LW choice:** 2.8 LTZ 4x4 auto. **Also look at:** Ford Everest, Toyota Fortuner, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport, Land Rover Discovery Sport



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GRAND VOYAGER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.8CRD LX	609 990	4/2.8TD	120/3800	360/1600	8.4
2.8CRD Limited	698 990	4/2.8TD	120/3800	360/1600	8.4

Service plan: 3-year/100 000km

Fuel tank: 76 litres. **Average sales per month:** 24 >> The Grand Voyager offers a vast cabin and a nifty seating arrangement. All models are well equipped and the 2.8-litre turbodiesel engine offers a generous wallop of torque. It's getting on in life, so it's worth checking out competitor vehicles. **LW choice:** 2.8 CRD Limited **Also look at:** Kia Grand Sedona, Mercedes-Benz V-Class, Volkswagen Caravelle/ California Beach



CITROËN Toll free 0860 211 112 Website: www.citroen.co.za

C4 CACTUS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
60kW Feel	237 900	3/1.2	60/5750	118/2750	4.6
e-THP 81kW Feel	269 900	3/1.2T	81/5500	205/1500	4.7
e-THP 81kW Shine	294 900	3/1.2T	81/5500	205/1500	4.7

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 50 litres. **Average sales per month:** 13 >> Citroën has introduced one of the funkiest little crossovers to arrive on the scene in quite some time. Sure, it doesn't have AWD and it doesn't boast tons of luggage space, but it does have trendy styling and a great engine. It also has enough ground clearance to ensure that you can travel on ugly gravel roads without hassle. Most importantly, the Cactus sports a very attractive price tag. Considering all it offers, the crossover offers great value for money. **LW Choice:** 1.2 Turbocharged Shine. **Also look at:** Renault Captur, Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 2008, Opel Mokka



C4 AIRCROSS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0i Attraction	313 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.5
2.0i Comfort	337 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.5
2.0i Seduction auto	360 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.6
Hdi 115 Seduction	376 900	4/1.6TD	84/3600	270/1750	4.6
Hdi 115 4WD Comfort	387 900	4/1.6TD	84/3600	270/1750	4.9
2.0i 4WD Exclusive	410 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	8.1
2.0i 4WD Exclusive	410 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	8.1

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 63 litres. **Average sales per month:** 6 >> It's cool, it's hip and it's rather pretty too. This is French manufacturer Citroën's new C4

Aircross – a suave compact SUV with French flair written all over it. Sure, it's not a real 4x4. But it's the Louis Vuitton of the soft-roader market. You'd never guess it, but this C4 Aircross is actually based on the Mitsubishi ASX and Outlander platform. Serious! The Citroën's intelligent 4WD system senses wheel slip and adjusts the power between the front and rear axles accordingly. The centre diff can be locked to provide a 50/50 split between the two axles. **LW choice:** Hdi 115 Seduction. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Subaru XV, Hyundai ix35, Nissan Qashqai



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500X	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Pop Star	310 900	4/1.6	81/5500	152/4500	6.4
1.4T Cross	344 900	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	6.0
1.4T Cross auto	359 900	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	5.7
1.4T Cross Plus	379 900	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	6.0
1.4T Cross Plus auto	394 900	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	5.7

Maintenance Plan: 3 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 48 litres. **Average sales per month:** 70

>> This is the Italians' idea of what a Jeep Renegade should have looked like. It rides on the same platform as the Jeep and has the same interior, but Fiat offers a wider range of engines and specification levels. It's expensive for a compact crossover, but this little tyke will definitely stand out in a crowd. **LW choice:** We haven't driven one yet **Also look at:** Jeep Renegade, Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Renault Captur, Suzuki Vitara / SX4



ECOSPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5 Ambiente	217 900	4/1.5	82/6300	138/4400	6.5
1.0T Trend	249 900	3/1.0T	92/6000	170/1400	5.7
1.0T Titanium	270 900	3/1.0T	92/6000	170/1400	5.7
1.5TDCi Trend	253 900	4/1.5TD	66/3750	205/2000	4.5
1.5TDCi Titanium	274 900	4/1.5TD	66/3750	205/2000	4.5
1.5 Titanium auto	274 900	4/1.5	82/6300	138/4400	6.5

Service Plan: 4 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:**

52 litres. **Average sales per month:** 968 >> Don't underestimate this little soft-roader – with 200mm ground clearance it's ready for that middlemanetjie. No AWD version is planned for SA as yet, though, as it makes up less than 10% of the Brazilian market, where the EcoSport made its debut. It's surprisingly spacious, light on fuel and easy to drive. **LW Choice:** 1.0T Titanium. **Also look at:** Honda HR-V, Mazda CX-3, Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Renault Duster / Captur, Peugeot 2008, Suzuki Vitara / SX4



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RANGER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SuperCab					
2.2 Hi-Rider	254 900	4/2.2TD	88/3700	285/1500	6.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XL	335 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 4x4 XL	392 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
3.2 Hi-Rider XLS	399 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.2
3.2 4x4 XLS	456 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.3
3.2 4x4 XLT auto	499 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.8

Double Cab					
2.2 Hi-Rider	284 900	4/2.2TD	88/3700	285/1500	6.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XL	339 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 4x4 XL	396 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XLS	428 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 4x4 XL-Plus	419 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 4x4 XLS	485 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XLT	458 900	4/2.2TD	118/3700	385/1500	6.9
3.2 Hi-Rider XLT	497 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.2
3.2 Hi-Rider XLT auto	509 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.5
3.2 4x4 XLT	554 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.3
3.2 4x4 XLT auto	566 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.0
3.2 Hi-Rider Wildtrak	526 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.2
3.2 Hi-Rider Wildtrak auto	537 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	8.5
3.2 4x4 Wildtrak auto	596 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.0

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km (excl base models) **Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** New >>> The Ranger is really good-looking, powerful, offers good value for money, has loads of interior space and comfort, rides like a car, and even comes with a five-star Euro NCAP safety rating! So it's just about a full house from Ford. Rugged underpinnings are now complimented by modern technology such as traction control, hill start assist and so on, but only in the top versions. All the 4x4 derivatives get low range and a rear diff lock. **LW choice:** 2.2TDCi XLS 4x4. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, VW Amarok, Isuzu KB



KUGA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5T Ambiente	329 900	4/1.5T	110/5700	240/1600	6.6
1.5T Ambiente auto	344 900	4/1.5T	132/5700	240/1600	7.0
1.5T Trend	366 900	4/1.5T	110/5700	240/1600	6.6
1.5T Trend auto	380 900	4/1.5T	132/5700	240/1600	7.0
1.5T AWD Trend	408 900	4/1.5T	132/5700	240/1600	7.7
2.0TDCi AWD Trend	434 900	4/2.0TD	132/3750	400/2000	6.2
2.0T AWD Titanium	449 900	4/2.0T	177/5700	340/2000	8.8
2.0TDCi AWD Titanium	469 900	4/2.0TD	132/3750	400/2000	6.2

Service plan: 4 years / 80 000 km for 1.5T and 2.0T; 5 years / 90 000 km for 2.0TDCi **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 355 >>> The Kuga has been making waves with its long features list, EcoBoost engine and technological additions, like a hands-free tailgate mechanism, Curve Control and lane-keep assist. Like most crossovers in its segment, it's not too fond of the rough stuff. That being said, it does have AWD and 198mm of ground clearance, so it can tackle bad gravel roads without hassle. **LW choice:** 1.5 EcoBoost Trend. **Also look at:** Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V, VW Tiguan



TOURNEO CUSTOM	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2TDCi SWB Ambiente	443 900	4/2.2TD	74/3500	310/1300	6.5
2.2TDCi LWB Ambiente	449 900	4/2.2TD	74/3500	310/1300	6.5
2.2TDCi SWB Trend	464 900	4/2.2TD	92/3500	350/1450	6.5
2.2TDCi LWB Trend	469 900	4/2.2TD	92/3500	350/1450	6.5
2.2TDCi SWB Limited	510 900	4/2.2TD	114/3500	385/1600	6.5

Service plan: n/a. **Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a >>> Ford's Tourneo Custom offers a vast amount of space at a reasonable price. The ride quality is very good for what it is and the diesel engine delivers adequate performance. It's not as refined or luxurious as some large MPVs, but as it's half the price, we're willing to forgive it. **LW choice:** 2.2TDCi SWB Limited. **Also look at:** Hyundai H-1, Kia Grand Sedona, Mercedes-Benz Vito, Volkswagen Kombi



EVEREST	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.2 4WD XLT	593 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	8.2
3.2 4WD Limited	646 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	8.2

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 154 >>> The Everest is currently the SUV of choice, if you're serious about off-roading. It's a giant leap forward for Ford and untouchable in its segment. The 3.2-litre is stunning, but it is expensive. The limited line-up will be joined by cheaper versions next year. **LW choice:** 3.2-litre 4x4 XLT Automatic. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Mitsubishi Triton, Isuzu KB, Nissan Navara



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TUNLAND	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.8 off-road Comfort	299 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 off-road Luxury	319 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 4x4 Comfort	384 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 4x4 Luxury	404 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3

Service plan: 2 years / 40 000 km for 4x2;

5 years / 70 000 km for 4x4 **Fuel tank:** 80 litres

Average sales per month: n/a >>> This is probably Which doesn't mean it's perfect, of course. It is clearly modelled in size and style according to the Hilux, but overall it really opens up a new playing field for the Chinese. The Cummins engine is another plus point, as is the list of other international partners. However, pricing is not as competitive as one would expect from a Chinese brand, with the extra attention to quality obviously hiking the price. It has 230mm ground clearance, a Borg Warner transfer case with 2H, 4H and 4LOW settings, and it also has a Dana rear differential. It's a tough drivetrain that can handle some punches. However, for now the lack of a rear differential lock means it can't quite go where the rest of the bakkie clan can safely go. **LW choice:** 2.8TD 4x4 Comfort. **Also look at:** GWM Steed 5, Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton, Toyota Hilux



GWM Toll free 011 805 6621 Website www.gwm.co.za

M4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5	189 900	4/1.5	77/6000	138/4200	7.2

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 45 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a

>>> The M4 is GWM's attempt at a small crossover. And overall, this is an impressive little car that offers exceptional value for money. It boasts loads of features. It even has a five-year/100 000km warranty and a five-year 45 000km service plan. Just don't take it very far off road! **LW choice:** We'll take it. **Also look at:** Nissan Juke, Ford EcoSport, Suzuki SX4



STEED 5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2L Lux	184 900	4/2.2	78/4600	190/2400	10.2
2.0VGT SX	229 900	4/2.0TD	78/4000	225/1400	9.3
2.4L Lux	214 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.7
2.4L 4x4 Lux	239 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.7
2.0VGT Lux	259 900	4/2.0TD	110/3600	310/1800	8.3
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux	289 900	4/2.0TD	110/3600	310/1800	8.3

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a >>> As far as Chinese double cabs go, the Steed is one of the best. Sure, it's ultimately not as refined or as plush as its Japanese counterparts, but it's loaded with standard kit. Prices remain very competitive. Armed with a reasonable amount of ground clearance (195mm), and an electronic Borg Warner 4x4 system with low-range, the 4x4 Steed can go where most other double cabs go, albeit in a less refined manner. **LW choice:** 2.0 VGT double cab. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, Nissan NP300 Hardbody



STEED 5E	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 SX	239 900	4/2.4	93/5250	200/2500	10.7
2.4 Xscape	256 900	4/2.4	93/5250	200/2500	10.7
2.0VGT SX	269 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.3
2.0VGT Xscape	289 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.3

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km.

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a

>>> GWM South Africa now offers a more upmarket version of the Steed called the 5E. It is still basically a Steed, and has the same engine options, but is more luxurious and well equipped than the standard Steed 5 model. Considering the pricing, the 5E offers a whole lot of bakkie for your money, and is a great option for a leisure vehicle. **LW Choice:** 2.0 VGT Xscape. **Also look at:** Standard Steed 5, Steed 6, Foton Tunland, JMC Vigus



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H5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 City	244 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.4 Lux	249 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.4 4x4 Lux	269 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.0VGT Lux	284 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	7.6
2.0VGT Lux auto	319 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	9.2
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux	319 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	7.6
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux auto	339 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	9.2

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 74 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » The H5 certainly looks the part of the modern crossover/SUV/4x4. Inside it is loaded with standard kit, but some observers may not like the copycat exterior lines. Still, pricing is keen, and the 310 Nm turbodiesel version looks really good on paper. With 180mm ground clearance and Borg Warner low-range 4x4 system, the H5 4x4 derivative can go where few drivers of 4x4s costing double the price will expect it to go. **LW choice:** H5 2.0VGT 4x4. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport



H6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5T City	259 900	4/1.5T	105/5600	210/2200	8.5
1.5T Lux	279 900	4/1.5T	105/5600	210/2200	8.5
2.0TCl Lux	349 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	310/1800	6.7

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 58 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a

» The H6 is GWM's attempt at a more urban crossover vehicle. With Subaru Forester-like good looks and a decent price tag, the H6 should do well. No AWD model available, though. **LW choice:** 2.0TCl.

Also look at: Ford Kuga, Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V, JMC Landwind



STEED 6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0VGT SX	299 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.8
2.0VGT Xscape	329 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.8

Service plan: Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** New

» Following the release of JMC's Vigus and Foton's Tunland, GWM has now also released its own large bakkie than offers the size and dimensions of those double cabs offered by established brands. The Steed 6 is an excellent vehicle overall, and shows how quickly GWM is improving. The cabin is wonderfully plush and has a European feel. Engine could use a tad more power, but that's hardly a deal-breaker. **LW Choice:** 2.0 VGT Xscape. **Also look at:** Foton Tunland, JMC Vigus, Steed 5E



HONDA Toll free 011 805 6621 Website www.honda.co.za

HR-V	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5 Comfort	305 800	4/1.5	88/6600	145/4600	6.2
1.8 Elegance	361 900	4/1.8	105/6500	172/4300	6.8

Service plan: 4 years / 60 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

40 litres. **Average sales per month:** 63 »

Honda's take on the compact crossover segment. We haven't driven it yet, but it looks handsome and Honda has been very generous with standard specifications. The petrol engines are fairly outdated for this segment, but power delivery is up there with the best. **LW choice:** We haven't driven it yet. **Also look at:** Fiat 500X, Ford EcoSport, Jeep Renegade, Nissan Juke / Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Renault Captur, Suzuki Vitara / SX4



CR-V	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Comfort	362 900	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.7
2.0 Comfort auto	377 900	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.6
2.0 Elegance	412 100	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.7
2.0 Elegance auto	427 100	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.6
2.4 Executive AWD	531 100	4/2.4	140/7000	220/4300	8.6
2.4 Exclusive AWD	568 800	4/2.4	140/7000	220/4300	8.6

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 58 litres. **Average sales per month:** 63

» The sleek CR-V is a highly accomplished option in its segment, but don't expect to be left breathless with excitement when you drive it. It is extremely well put together, and has an impeccable reliability record. A new version was recently introduced that has added a whole lot of value for money options to the line-up. The Honda doesn't come close to being a real off-roader (ground clearance is limited and no low range is fitted). But then it doesn't pretend to be an off-roader, either. **LW choice:** 2.0 Comfort. **Also look at:** Nissan X-Trail, Renault Koleos, Toyota RAV4, Ford Kuga



HYUNDAI Toll free 0861 4272 22 Website www.hyundai.co.za

ix35	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Premium	349 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Premium Special Edition	370 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Premium auto	365 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0 Premium auto Special Edition	386 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
1.7CRDi Premium	376 900	4/1.7TD	85/4000	260/1250	5.3
1.7CRDi Premium Special Edition	396 900	4/1.7TD	85/4000	260/1250	5.3
2.0 Executive	391 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Executive Special Edition	406 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Elite	416 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.8
2.0 Elite Special Edition	431 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.8
2.0CRDi Elite	447 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	383/1800	6.5
2.0CRDi Elite Special Edition	467 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	383/1800	6.5
2.0CRDi 4WD Elite	509 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.2
2.0CRDi 4WD Elite Special Edition	529 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.2

Service Plan: 5 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 58 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » This CUV is even less intended for serious off-road use than the Tucson was. But the ix35 is a comfortable, affordable on-roader/soft-roader with trendy SUV looks. Mind, trendy is what sells cars in this segment, and the ix35 has got that department covered. The 4x4 derivatives get an electronic 4x4 system that apportions torque to slipping wheels, as required. 170mm limits its off-road range, though. Low-profile tyres and rough gravel roads also don't mix well. So it's good for good gravel, a wee bit of mud, and tar. **LW choice:** 2.0 Premium. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Nissan Qashqai, Ford Kuga, VW Tiguan



H-1	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 wagon GLS	453 900	4/2.4	126/6000	224/4200	10.2
2.5CRDi wagon GLS	535 900	4/2.5TD	120/3800	392/2000	9.8

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

75 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a »

The H1 is getting on in life, but if you are in the market for something big, refined and with a generous amount of standard equipment, it's still worth looking at. The turbocharged diesel engine is preferred as the petrol powertrain is underpowered and very thirsty. **LW choice:** The 2.5 turbodiesel. **Also look at:** Chrysler Grand Voyager, Ford Tourneo Custom, Kia Grand Sedona, Mercedes-Benz Vito, Volkswagen Kombi / Caravelle



SANTA FE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDi Elite	659 900	4/2.2TD	145/3800	436/1800	8.0
2.2CRDi 4WD Elite	699 900	4/2.2TD	145/3800	436/1800	8.3



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Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 64 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a >> The Santa Fe might look like a large soft-roader, but it's very useful when the going gets tough, especially in soft sand. The diesel engine is very good, as is the automatic gearbox, but it's getting a bit expensive these days. **LW choice:** seven-seats and all-wheel drive, please. **Also look at:** Kia Sorento, Toyota Fortuner, Ford Everest



INFINITI Toll free 0800 771 771 Website www.infiniti.co.za

QX50	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0d	596 949	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.0d GT	637 824	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.0d GT Premium	679 230	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.7 GT	629 070	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.2
3.7 GT Premium	670 476	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.2

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a >> Infiniti's EX medium-sized crossover has been renamed to the QX50. It offers a lot of luxury, and decent engines, but can Infiniti coax buyers out of their German vehicles?



A good vehicle, but probably too pricey for its own good. **LW Choice:** 3.0d GT. **Also look at:** Audi Q5, BMW X3, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Lexus NX, Volvo XC60, Mercedes GLC

QX70	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.7 GT	734 000	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 GT Premium	794 000	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S	779 000	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S Premium	839 000	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S Black	852 500	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.0d GT	765 500	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d GT Premium	816 500	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S	801 500	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S Premium	861 500	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S Black	875 000	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
5.0 S Premium	935 000	V8/5.0	287/6500	500/4400	13.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 90 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1 >> Like the QX50, the QX70 faces an uphill battle. It is undoubtedly a very sporty and refined SUV, but its price places it in the same category as the German brands. If you want something different but still impressive, the QX70 is worth a look. **LW choice:** 3.0d GT. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Land Rover Range Rover Sport, Porsche Cayenne, Volvo XC90



QX80	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
5.6	1 265 000	V8/5.6	298/5800	560/4000	14.8

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 98 litres **Average sales per month:** 5 >> The Infiniti QX80 is a humungous vehicle with a price tag to match. At the price it's certainly not cheap, but it offers better value for money than all of its main competitors. The 5.6-litre V8 is an absolute joy. It has loads of torque low down in the rev range, making it perfect for dune driving. The noises it makes are also lovely to listen to. It does consume an awful lot of fuel, though. **LW choice:** only one model **Also look at:** Land Rover Range Rover, Lexus LX, Mercedes-Benz GL



ISUZU Toll free 0800 422 777 Website www.isuzu.co.za

KB	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Extended Cab					
250D-Teq Hi-Rider	321 300	4/2.5TD	100/3600	320/1800	7.6
300D-Teq LX	394 200	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq LX auto	451 800	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq 4x4 LX	407 500	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9
Double Cab					
250D-Teq Hi-Rider	328 000	4/2.5TD	100/3600	320/1800	7.7
250D-Teq LE	414 400	4/2.5TD	100/3600	320/1800	7.7
250D-Teq 4x4 LE	435 600	4/2.5TD	100/3600	320/1800	7.9
300D-Teq LX	463 700	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.8
300D-Teq LX auto	477 300	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq 4x4 LX	523 600	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9
300D-Teq 4x4 LX auto	536 600	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** It's new >> The facelifted KB brings Isuzu into the new millennium, with stability control now as standard. The top-spec models now also have top-notch infotainment systems that don't have to stand back for anything else in the segment. The 3.0-litre engine carries on as is, but can now be mated to an automatic gearbox. The new 2.5-litre turbodiesel offers adequate power at Joburg altitude, but it may struggle if you ask it to go any higher than that. **LW choice:** 250 D-Teq 4x4 LE. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, Mitsubishi Triton, Ford Ranger, Mazda BT-50, Volkswagen Amarok



JEEP Toll free 0800 1333 55 Website www.jeep.co.za

RENEGADE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6L Longitude	316 990	4/1.6	81/5500	152/4500	6.0
1.4L T Limited	375 990	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	6.0
1.6L Multijet Limited	389 990	4/1.6TD	88/3750	320/1750	4.6
1.4L T 4x4 Limited	452 990	4/1.4T	125/5500	250/2500	6.9
2.4L 4x4 Trailhawk	450 990	4/2.4	137/6250	232/3900	9.8

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 48 litres. **Average sales per month:** 63 >> The Renegade is a new sort of Jeep for a new sort of customer. Sure, it still boasts rugged off-road styling, but this is an SUV more at home in an urban environment than out in the bundu. More off-road oriented versions will arrive later on, but for now the Renegade is available in 4x2 only. Still, it can handle some pretty ugly gravel roads, so it should be a popular choice amongst trendy weekend warriors. It is (very) pricey, but finishes are undeniably premium. While the styling is Jeep, everything underneath is basically a Fiat 500X. The vehicle is even built in Italy. **LW Choice:** 1.4 Limited. **Also look at:** BMW X1, Fiat 500X, Honda HR-V, Mazda CX-3, MINI Countryman, Nissan Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Renault Captur, Suzuki Vitara / SX4



COMPASS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0L Limited	377 990	4/2.0	115/6300	190/5100	7.6
2.0L Limited auto	390 990	4/2.0	115/6300	190/5100	8.2

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 51 litres. **Average sales per month:** 70 >> The Compass looks reasonably sporty and seems to be well-equipped for the price, but the two-litre engine battles a bit at Highveld altitude. Price is good though. Jeep makes no pretensions of this Compass being a pukka 4x4. It is front-wheel driven, with 205mm ground clearance and traction control – so it can get you to a few 4x4-ish places, but it is much happier on a gravel road than a 4x4 track. **LW choice:** A Hemi V8 version? Pretty please? **Also look at:** Mitsubishi Outlander, Subaru Forester



WRANGLER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.6L Sahara	494 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.0
Unlimited 3.6L Sahara	540 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.7
Unlimited 3.6L Rubicon	566 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.9
Unlimited 2.8CRD Sahara	601 990	4/2.8TD	147/3600	460/1600	8.3

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 79 >> The Wrangler has genuine go-anywhere abilities, a turbodiesel engine option, an electronic stability programme and traction control, the option of four doors, and reasonably good quality. The latest generation V6 petrol engine has done wonders for eradicating that archaic driving experience of older Wranglers. Overall the Wrangler is still iconic, legendary, and looks just like it did before. But, it's now just way better! The Rubicon models, with even lower low-range gears, front and rear diff locks, a solid axle at both ends and heavy-duty rock rails, really can 4x4! **LW choice:** Unlimited 3.6L Rubicon. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 70 / FJ Cruiser, Land-Rover Defender, Rooikat armoured vehicle



CHEROKEE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4L Longitude	523 990	4/2.4	130/6400	229/3900	8.3
3.2L Limited	565 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	9.5
3.2L 4x4 Limited	616 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	10.0
3.2L 4x4 Trailhawk	668 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	10.0

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km.

Fuel tank: 60 litres **Average sales per month:** 70 >> Jeep's popular Cherokee has undergone a very dramatic reinvention. The latest model looks nothing like its predecessor, and is based on the same underpinnings as the Dodge Dart, which means it is essentially a crossover. The new Cherokee is also available in FWD. That said, the vehicle



is apparently still very capable off road, with the "Trail Rated" Trailhawk model sporting low-range gearing, good ground clearance and all sorts of off-road aids. Build quality is truly excellent, but this increase in quality is reflected in the pricing. The Cherokee is a very pricey compact SUV. **LW choice:** 3.2 FWD Limited. **Also look at:** BMW X3, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Subaru Forester, Audi Q5, Mercedes GLC, Lexus NX, Infiniti QX50, Volvo XC60

GRAND CHEROKEE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.6L Limited	724 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
3.6L Overland	799 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
3.6L Summit	891 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
5.7L Overland	835 990	V8/5.7	259/5200	520/4200	13.0
3.0CRD Limited	846 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
3.0CRD Overland	917 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
3.0CRD Summit	1 019 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
SRT	1 099 990	V8/6.4	344/6250	624/4100	14.0

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km.

Fuel tank: 94 litres. **Average sales per month:** 210. **>>>** Jeep's Grand Cherokee is big, bold and capable. In fact, it boasts almost all the bells and whistles you'd find in the BMW X5 and Discovery 4. The new family face as well as an updated, 8-speed gearbox were added in August 2013, with the engine line-up and drive train unchanged. **LW choice:** 3.6 Overland. **Also look at:** BMW X5, Land Rover Discovery / Range Rover Sport, Mercedes GLE, Volvo XC90



JMC Tel 011 668 0300 Website: www.jmcsa.co.za

JMC VIGUS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 LX	249 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.2
2.4 SLX	279 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.2
2.4 4x4 LX	315 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.7
2.4TDCi LX	279 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.0
2.4TDCi SLX	309 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.0
2.4TDCi 4WD LX	345 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.2
2.4TDCi 4WD SLX	375 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.2

Service plan: 5 year / 60 000km

Fuel tank: 68-74 litres **Average sales per month:**

1. **>>>** The Vigus is JMC's best product yet, but it's still not on par with the mainstream double-cab bakkies, nor a few other Chinese products. If price is the main consideration, then it's definitely worth looking at. The engines are based on powertrains that have been around for years. They're down on power compared to the competitors, but at least you know the engine is going to last. **LW choice:** a diesel 4x4 **Also look at:** Foton Tunland, SsangYong Actyon Sports, used Hilux or Ranger.



JMC LANDWIND 5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0T Lux	269 880	4/2.0T	140/5500	250/2800	8.5

Service plan: 2 years/60 000km **Fuel tank:** n/a

Average sales per month: n/a. **>>>** JMC's first attempt at offering an SUV locally. Little is known about the car, but the claimed power output and fuel consumption figures seem to be on a par with other vehicles of the same size. It looks pretty decent, but we'll reserve comment until we have driven the vehicle. **LW choice:** Only one model. **Also look at:** Mahindra XUV500, GWM H5/H6, used mid-size SUVs.



KIA Tel 011 457 0200 Website: www.kia.co.za

SPORTAGE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Ignite	361 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0	393 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0 auto	406 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0CRDi	423 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	382/1800	6.7
2.0CRDi auto	436 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0CRDi Tec auto	456 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0 AWD	428 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0 AWD auto	441 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0CRDi AWD	458 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	382/1800	6.7
2.0CRDi AWD auto	471 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0CRDi AWD Tec auto	491 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0CRDi AWD Explore	514 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:**

55 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a **>>>** The latest Sportage is a great vehicle. Smart, good looking, safe, luxurious... it's got it all. Sharing its underpinnings with the Hyundai ix35, the Kia has, like the Hyundai, lost a bit of its off-road character in favour of improved on-road performance. Pricing is extremely competitive, and some of Kia's more mainstream



opposition must be a little bit worried about the latest wave of Kia products. With only 172 millimetres ground clearance and no low-range, the 4x4 models are more suited to slippery roads than driving through dongas. On gravel it is okay, but the trendy low-profile tyres are not very happy on rough surfaces. **LW choice:** 2.0 Ignite. **Also look at:** Hyundai ix35, Nissan Qashqai, Volkswagen Tiguan

SORENTO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 LS	397 995	4/2.4	127/6000	225/4000	9.2
2.2CRDi LX	519 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	6.7
2.2CRDi AWD EX	619 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	6.7
2.2CRDi AWD SX	654 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	6.8

Service plan: 4 years / 90 000 km (LS)

Fuel tank: n/a. **Average sales per month:** n/a

>>> The Sorento offers exceptional value for money, but not at the expense of quality, equipment and a refined ride. It is spacious, making it the perfect vehicle for families who have an active lifestyle – a great package. **LW choice:** Diesel five-seater, but the entry-level petrol model offers a lot of car at the price. **Also look at:** Chevrolet Captiva, Hyundai Santa Fe



GRAND SEDONA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDi EX	509 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	8.0
2.2CRDi SX	635 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	8.0
2.2CRDi SXL	679 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	440/1750	8.0
3.3 V6 SX	615 995	V6/3.3	199/6000	318/5200	10.9
3.3 V6 SXL	659 995	V6/3.3	199/6000	318/5200	10.9

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: n/a **Average sales per month:** n/a

>>> This is the latest large MPV on the block and perhaps the best one yet. Available in seven- and 11-seat guise, with the option of either a diesel or petrol V6 engine, the Kia caters for large families who like to travel in comfort and style. It's well equipped and has a 5-star safety rating. **LW choice:** 7-seater diesel. **Also look at:** Chrysler Grand Voyager, Mercedes-Benz Vito / V-Class, Volkswagen Kombi / Caravelle / California Beach



LAND ROVER Toll free 0860 110 090 Website: www.landrover.co.za

DEFENDER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
90 TD station wagon S	554 700	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
90 TD station wagon Heritage	617 600	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
90 TD station wagon Adventure	671 500	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
110 TD station wagon S	594 900	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
110 TD station wagon Heritage	680 600	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1



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110 TD station wagon Adventure	718 800	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
110 TD S	614 100	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
130 TD crew cab E	623 200	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1

Service plan: None **Fuel tank:** 60 litres for Defender 90; 75 litres for Defender 110/130. **Average sales per month:** 32. ➤ The Defender is now powered by a 2.2-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel engine with emissions that conform to Euro V standards. Still, it's a Defender, so you also get that gap between some panels, and the handling in corners is not exactly dynamic. But off-road, it still rates as one of the best. It's a legend in its own time. The permanently four-wheel-driven Defender is just about as good as it gets. In the past the lack of a standard rear diff lock was its only downfall on axle twisters, but with the advent of the advanced traction control system, it doesn't stop. Well... mostly not. The new 2.2-litre engine is also up to the off-road task. **LW choice:** 110 station wagon. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 70, Jeep Wrangler, a Sherman tank?



DISCOVERY SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
S TD4	545 901	4/2.2TD	110/3500	400/1750	6.0
S SD4	595 020	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
S Si4	598 200	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
SE SD4	640 320	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
SE Si4	643 500	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
HSE SD4	697 020	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
HSE Si4	700 200	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
HSE Luxury SD4	736 120	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
HSE Luxury Si4	739 300	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000km **Fuel tank:** 65 litres **Average sales per month:** 177 ➤ The Land Rover Freelander is no more. Instead, we now have the Discovery Sport – a vehicle that is sportier and more stylish than its predecessor. The Freelander was never a phenomenal sales success for Land Rover SA, but the Disco Sport appears set to follow in the prosperous footsteps of the full-size Discovery, Evoque and Range Rover Sport. The Disco Sport isn't a hardcore 4x4, but it is an excellent all-round SUV – offering a good mix of on-road and off-road performance. If you're looking for a compact SUV that can play in the dirt, the Disco Sport is worth looking at. **LW choice:** SD4 S. **Also look at:** Jeep Cherokee, BMW X3, Mercedes GLC, Subaru Forester, Volvo XC60



RANGE ROVER EVOQUE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SE SD4	680 922	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
SE Si4	710 090	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
HSE Dynamic SD4	815 622	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
HSE Dynamic Si4	844 790	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
coupé HSE Dynamic SD4	815 212	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.2
coupé HSE Dynamic Si4	844 790	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
SD4 Autobiography	865 622	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 Autobiography	894 790	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 58 litres for SD4; 70 for Si4. **Average sales per month:** 59. ➤ Stylish and fashionable, the baby Range Rover can actually go the off-road mile too. Classy, luxurious, trendy, seriously good looking – the Evoque is a fashion model for the road and dirt. Sure, it doesn't have low range, but it gets the brand's Terrain Response system, as well as at least 215mm ground clearance, and electronic tricks such as hill descent control. Add lots of horses to the package, and the Evoque can stay with at least a Freelander in a tough off-road environment. And that's pretty good! **LW choice:** SD4. **Also look at:** Porsche Macan, BMW X4, Lexus NX



DISCOVERY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
TDV6 XS	731 386	V6/3.0TD	155/4000	520/1500	8.8
SDV6 S	874 886	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8
SCV6 SE	928 529	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	12.0
SDV6 SE	929 286	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8
SCV6 HSE	1 024 429	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	12.0
SDV6 HSE	1 025 286	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 82 litres for TDV6/SDV6; 86 for SCV6 **Average sales per month:** 136. ➤ Building on the impressive Disco III, with an even better 4x4 system, the Disco 4 is more competent on road and low quality has been addressed in the latest two versions. So, is Disco 4 now perfect? Well, it's very, very close. Armed with Landy's comprehensive and now updated Terrain Response System and air suspension (XS



model has coil springs), the Disco can go anywhere, anytime. Nuff said. It is one of the best off-roader and on-road combination packages on the market today. **LW choice:** TDV6 XS. **Also look at:** Mercedes-Benz GLE, VW Touareg, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, Volvo XC90

RANGE ROVER SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SCV6 S	983 074	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3
TDV6 S	1 007 631	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	7.9
SCV6 SE	1 080 774	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3
SDV6 SE	1 167 031	V6/3.0TD	215/4000	600/2000	7.9
SCV6 HSE	1 279 774	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3
SDV6 HSE	1 394 531	V6/3.0TD	215/4000	600/2000	7.9
SCV6 HST	1 393 074	V6/3.0S	280/6500	450/3500	11.3
Supercharged HSE Dynamic	1 521 023	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 HSE Dynamic	1 531 383	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1750	8.7
Supercharged Autobiography Dynamic	1 664 323	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 Autobiography Dynamic	1 675 283	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1750	8.7
SVR	1 923 125	V8/5.0S	405/6000	680/3500	13.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 85 litres for SDV6; 105 for other **Average sales per month:** 177. ➤ The latest Range Rover Sport is a huge step up from the previous model in all aspects. The first Sport was based on the underpinning of the Disco, making it more of a Disco Sport than a Rangie Sport, really. The new one, though, is very impressive. It is lighter, sportier, prettier and far more plush than the old one. A real competitor in its segment. **LW choice:** SDV6 HSE. **Also look at:** Porsche Cayenne, Mercedes GLE, BMW X5/X6, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Volvo XC90



RANGE ROVER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
TDV6 Vogue	1 572 578	V6/3.0TD	190/4000	600/2000	8.6
SDV8 Vogue SE	1 879 483	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
Supercharged Vogue SE	1 936 525	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 Autobiography	2 113 483	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
Supercharged Autobiography Range Rover L	2 170 325	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
L SDV8 Autobiography	2 202 283	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
L Supercharged Autobiography	2 259 125	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
L SDV8 SVAutobiography	3 038 483	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
L Supercharged SVAutobiography	3 181 225	V8/5.0S	405/6000	680/2500	13.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 85 litres for TDV6; 105 for other **Average sales per month:** 79. ➤ It's as extravagant as a 100-person philharmonic orchestra, as elegant as the Queen herself, yet it is also as resilient as Bear Grylls when the going gets tough. It's the new Range Rover, now sporting an all-aluminium monocoque construction, and it is as decadent and as capable as ever. It has more technology than the Airbus A380, and enough plush luxury to keep Prince Charles happy. Moreover, it has all the gadgets and gears, and can go anywhere. But, even if that Lotto ticket comes through, we wouldn't want to test the Rangy's ultimate capabilities on a rough 4x4 track. It may get scratched! **LW choice:** SDV8 Autobiography. **Also look at:** Porsche Cayenne, Mercedes-Benz GL, Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Audi Q7



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NX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
200t E	552 300	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
200t EX	593 100	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
200t F-Sport	683 700	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
300h EX	647 300	4/2.5e	145e	210+e	6.0

Maintenance plan: 4 years / 100 000km **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 38. ➤ Lexus' latest vehicle – the NX – is a compact and very stylish SUV. It has bold and aggressive styling that is sure to be controversial, but is undeniably eye-catching. Since this is a Lexus, its cabin is a joy to spend time in, and boasts every creature comfort imaginable. Shortcomings? Well, there are no diesel engines on offer. However, its turbopetrol mill is a great one. The Lexus NX isn't a hardcore 4x4, but it is a great fashion accessory. It even comes with its own little make-up mirror in the centre console! **LW choice:** NX 200t EX. **Also look at:** BMW X3 / X4, Land Rover Discovery Sport / Range Rover Evoque, Audi Q5, Jeep Cherokee, Mercedes GLC, Volvo XC60



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RX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
350 EX	748 800	V6/3.5	204/6200	346/4700	10.6
450h SE	951 300	V6/3.5e	220e	±550e	6.3

Maintenance plan: 4 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 72 litres for 350; 65 for 450h

Average sales per month: 2. ➤ The latest Lexus RX is sleeker and more sophisticated than ever before. It was never designed for driving up Baboon's Pass, but instead offers an immensely classy and outstanding driving experience on tar, and a little bit of gravel. Anyone who wants to know what the term "refinement" means, just needs to take a spin in an RX. The hybrid offers the best of several worlds. We used to say that the RX, with its electronic 4x4 system, is only good on gravel. But after the hybrid version conquered Sani Pass we have to concede – it's still no pukka 4x4, but it certainly went places we never thought it could. **LW choice:** 450h SE. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Mercedes-Benz GLE, Infiniti QX70, Volvo XC90



LX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
450d	1 393 000	V8/4.5	195/3400	650/1600	10.2
570	1 435 100	V8/5.7	270/5600	530/3200	14.5

Maintenance plan: 4 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 93 litres. **Average sales per month:** 4

➤ If a Toyota Land Cruiser 200 is not quite posh and exclusive enough for you, here's the answer: the Lexus LX570. Essentially a Cruiser 200 under different sheet metal, with all the off-road goodies, this super-Cruiser features Lexus-ised styling, a new badge, and quite a lot more horsepower from a 5.7-litre V8 petrol engine, to fit in with the more upmarket "Lexus image". Luxury, performance and capability is out of the top drawer, as is refinement. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Toyota Land Cruiser 200, Land Rover Range Rover, Mercedes-Benz GL



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GENIO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDe double cab	219 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	7.9

Service plan: 3 years / 100 000km. **Average**

sales per month: 11. ➤ **Fuel tank:** 74 litres

Arguably more workhorse than leisure vehicle, the Genio will nevertheless appeal to some looking for a family bakkie. It's got two rows of seating, a reasonably spacious loading area and Mahindra's impressive 2.2-litre mHawk engine. It doesn't have a 4x4 system, and ground clearance is a rather middling 195mm, but it'll be able to handle dirt roads. Price is its most attractive feature, but competition in this segment of the market is becoming rather stiff. **LW choice:** We'd probably go for the Scorpio Pik-Up. **Also look at:** Mahindra Scorpio Pik-Up, GWM Steed 5, Tata Xenon



QUANTO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDe	214 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	7.6

Service plan: 3 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:**

55 litres. **Average sales per month:** 10 ➤

The Quanto is Mahindra's attempt at a funky compact SUV in the mould of the Fiat Panda. Predictably, it doesn't have an AWD system, which keeps cost down, but there's still a lot of competition around R200 000 mark. **LW choice:** A Scorpio. **Also look at:** GWM M4, Ford EcoSport, Renault Duster



SCORPIO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Pik-Up					
2.5TCI	233 995	4/2.5TD	74/3800	258/1800	9.9
2.5TCI 4x4	261 995	4/2.5TD	74/3800	258/1800	9.9
2.2CRDe	254 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe Adventure	287 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4	281 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 Adventure	311 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
SUV					
2.2CRDe VLX	249 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe VLX Adventure	275 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 VLX	289 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 VLX Adventure	315 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8

Service plan: 3 years / 60 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 7. ➤ Still costing a fraction of the Big Name SUV prices, the Scorpio range offers a budget-priced alternative in the SUV and double cab markets. The new Adventure models are real value-for-money overlanders with bull bars,



roof racks and more. An auto rear diff lock, shift-on-the-fly 4x4 selection, low-range gearing and a torque-laden engine means that for your money, you get decent off-roading ability. **LW choice:** Pik-Up 2.2CRDe 4x4. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, GWM Steed, Mahindra Bolero

XUV500	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDe W4	262 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	6.5
2.2CRDe W6	304 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	6.5
2.2CRDe W8	339 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	6.5
2.2CRDe W8 AWD	359 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	7.0

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

53. ➤ Mahindra's compact SUV offering offers a surprising amount of car for the money. Sure, the styling is quirky and different, but the engine and gearbox, combined with loads of standard features and kit make up for the quirkiness. It's not intended as a bundu basher and while the AWD system comes with a list of driver aids, it's not fitted with a low-range box. **LW choice:** 2.2 W8 4x2. **Also look at:** GWM H5, JMC Landwind



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BT-50	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
FreeStyle Cab					
2.2 SLX	313 100	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
3.2 SLE	350 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.3
3.2 SLE auto	362 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.1
3.2 4x4 SLE	402 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.8
Double Cab					
2.2 SLE	370 400	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
3.2 SLE	402 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.3
3.2 SLE auto	412 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.1
3.2 4x4 SLE	454 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.8
3.2 4x4 SLE auto	466 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.7

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:**

131. ➤ Mazda's new BT-50 may share its tough underpinnings with the Ford Ranger, but is clearly aimed more at the leisure than the workhorse market. The top-end models get all the latest safety and luxury kit. The styling polarizes opinions, but underneath it's just as capable as the other double cab bakkies in the leisure market. **LW choice:** 3.2 SLE auto. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Ford Ranger, VW Amarok



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CX-3	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Active	254 900	4/2.0	115/6000	204/2800	n/a
2.0 Active auto	270 400	4/2.0	115/6000	204/2800	6.5
2.0 Dynamic	277 900	4/2.0	115/6000	204/2800	n/a
2.0 Dynamic auto	288 400	4/2.0	115/6000	204/2800	6.5
2.0 Individual auto	325 900	4/2.0	115/6000	204/2800	6.5

Service plan: 3 years / unlimited km

Fuel tank: 48 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a.

» Mazda's first attempt at building a compact crossover. All of them are equipped with the same 2.0-litre four-cylinder naturally aspirated petrol engine, which is a fairly large and powerful engine compared to its main rivals. Standard specification is good, but we haven't driven it yet, so we can't comment on the driving experience. **LW choice:** Not driven yet. **Also look at:** Fiat 500X, Ford EcoSport, Honda HR-V, Jeep Renegade, Nissan Juke / Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Renault Captur, Suzuki Vitara / SX4



CX-5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Active	324 900	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.0 Active auto	334 900	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.0 Dynamic	336 200	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.2DE Active	385 900	4/2.2TD	110/4500	380/1800	5.7
2.5 Individual	416 900	4/2.5	141/5700	256/3250	6.9
2.2DE AWD Akera	474 700	4/2.2TD	129/4500	420/2000	5.9

Service plan: 3 years / unlimited km

Fuel tank: 56 litres. **Average sales per month:** 217.

» The Mazda CX-5 used to be the a rather forgettable SUV, but a recent model revision has changed all that. The range now includes entry-level FWD models, as well as a diesel AWD derivative. It's very good on tar, but the inclusion of an AWD model means it's now much better when the going gets tough. Quality and space are on par with competitor vehicles. **LW choice:** 2.2 DE Akera AWD. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi ASX, Nissan Qashqai, Hyundai ix35, Kia Sportage, Volkswagen Tiguan



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GLA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GLA200	440 849	4/1.6T	115/5300	250/1250	5.9
GLA200 auto	458 747	4/1.6T	115/5300	250/1250	5.9
GLA200CDI	465 000	4/2.1TD	100/3400	300/1400	4.5
GLA200CDI auto	483 000	4/2.1TD	100/3400	300/1400	4.5
GLA220CDI 4Matic	538 631	4/2.1TD	125/3400	350/1400	5.1
GLA250 4Matic	614 288	4/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	6.6
Mercedes-AMG GLA45 4Matic	790 843	4/2.0T	280/6000	475/2250	7.4

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km. **Fuel**

tank: 50 litres for GLA200, 200CDI; 56 litres for 220CDI, 250 and 45 AMG **Average sales per month:** n/a. » All the models based on the A-Class hatch have been a massive success so far and we have little reason to believe that it'll be any different for the GLA. It's quite expensive, but it seems to be worth the money. **LW choice:** GLA 220 CDI 4Matic. **Also look at:** Audi Q3 / RS Q3, BMW X1, MINI Countryman, Subaru XV, Volvo V40 CrossCountry



GLC	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GLC220d	602 260	4/2.1TD	125/3000	400/1400	5.5
GLC250	609 620	4/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	7.1
GLC250d	622 260	4/2.1TD	150/3800	500/1600	5.5
GLC300	660 748	4/2.0T	175/5500	370/1300	7.6

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km.

Fuel tank: n/a. **Average sales per month:** n/a. »

This car is Mercedes' first foray into the mid-size luxury SUV segment, but it's a good attempt. As comfortable and refined as its bigger brother and fairly capable off-road. Not as dynamic as a BMW X3, but better in every other way you can think of. **LW choice:** 250d. **Also look at:** BMW X1 / X3, Audi Q5, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Jeep Cherokee



V-CLASS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
V200CDI	695 981	4/2.1TD	100/3800	330/1200	6.5
V200CDI auto	719 981	4/2.1TD	100/3800	330/1200	6.1
V220CDI	726 875	4/2.1TD	120/3800	380/1400	6.1
V220CDI auto	750 875	4/2.1TD	120/3800	380/1400	5.9
V250 BlueTec	782 416	4/2.1TD	140/3800	440/1400	6.0
V220CDI Avantgarde	949 175	4/2.1TD	120/3800	380/1400	5.9
V250 BlueTec Avantgarde	984 196	4/2.1TD	140/3800	440/1400	6.0

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a. » The V-Class is the ultimate lifestyle vehicle for large families. It seats eight people in supreme comfort and still has room for their luggage. The diesel engines are powerful yet frugal, which means you can cover long distances without stopping. It is very expensive, but you can see why. **LW choice:** 220 CDI. **Also look at:** Chrysler Grand Voyager, Volkswagen Caravelle, Kia Grand Sedona



GLE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GLE250d	866 694	4/2.1TD	150/3800	500/1600	5.9
GLE350d	970 053	V6/3.0TD	190/3400	620/1600	6.6
GLE400	968 747	V6/3.0T	245/5250	480/1400	9.2
GLE500	1 181 287	V8/4.7T	320/5250	700/1800	11.5
Mercedes-AMG GLE63	1 726 006	V8/5.5T	410/5750	700/1750	11.8
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S	1 855 006	V8/5.5T	430/5500	760/1750	11.8

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km.

Fuel tank: 93 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a. » The Mercedes-Benz GLE is a stunning car, especially with a diesel engine. You can also specify it with an off-road package and air-suspension, which turns it into a proper off-roader. It's as capable out there as it is within the confines of the city. Its large dimensions make it the perfect family vehicle. **LW choice:** Not driven yet. **Also look at:** BMW X5, Audi Q7, Range Rover Sport



GLE COUPÉ	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GLE350d coupé	1 006 774	V6/3.0TD	190/3400	620/1600	7.2
GLE450 AMG coupé	1 110 057	V6/3.0T	270/5500	520/1800	9.4
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S coupé	1 876 111	V8/5.5T	430/5500	760/1750	11.9

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km. **Fuel**

tank: 93 litres. **Average sales per month:** New. »

Mercedes finally has a competitor for the popular BMW X6 and it's very good. The GLE is relatively spacious and as comfortable as a Benz should be. The performance of the two petrol models is stunning, while the diesel unit makes sense on almost every level. **LW choice:** 450 AMG. **Also look at:** BMW X6, Range Rover Sport, Porsche Cayenne



GL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GL350 BlueTec	1 163 031	V6/3.0TD	190/3600	620/1600	8.0
GL500	1 324 387	V8/4.7T	320/5250	700/1800	11.5
GL63 AMG	1 991 537	V8/5.5T	410/5250	760/2000	12.3

Maintenance plan: 6 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 100 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a. » If you like super-size meals, super-size houses, and super-size swimming pools, the super-size GL may be just your thing. Since it was originally supposed to replace Merc's Gelandewagen 4x4, it gets all the tricks in the off-roading book. Ground clearance is 307mm and the Airmatic air suspension means it goes just about anywhere. It is also big on luxury and safety. Performance is plentiful too. **LW choice:** GL350 BlueTec. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Audi Q7, Land Rover Range Rover



G-CLASS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
G300CDI Professional	1 053 986	V6/3.0TD	135/3800	400/1600	11.7
G350d	1 432 467	V6/3.0TD	180/3600	600/1600	9.9
Mercedes-AMG G63	2 176 725	V8/5.5T	420/5500	760/1750	13.8
Mercedes-AMG G63 Edition 463	2 301 725	V8/5.5T	420/5500	760/1750	13.8

Maintenance plan: None for G300; 6 years/

100 000 km for G350d/G63. **Fuel tank:** 96 litres.

Average sales per month: n/a. » As the preferred 4x4 for a vast number of military organisations across the globe, the Merc's off-road pedigree and durability is legendary. This is as good as it gets. Recently Mercedes added two more models to range – including the 420 kW G63 AMG model. You got to ask: do you really want so much power in a G-wagon? Still, it goes anywhere, with front, centre and rear diff locks, low-range that's selectable on the move, a 600mm forging depth, Merc's 4ETS traction control system and enough ground clearance to clear just about anything. **LW choice:** G350d. **Also look at:** A Second World War Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger tank



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MINI COUNTRYMAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cooper	343 283	4/1.6	90/6000	160/4250	6.5
Cooper auto	362 748	4/1.6	90/6000	160/4250	7.6




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Cooper S	404 488	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	6.6
Cooper S auto	423 543	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	7.5
John Cooper Works ALL4	501 272	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.0
John Cooper Works ALL4 auto	518 890	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.3

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 75 000 km

Fuel tank: 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 25

» A MINI gets five doors and the option of four-wheel drive. Spacious, as trendy as anything you can think of, and pretty fast too, this Mini offers a lot of car for young jet setters. Of course, it's not a 4x4 that can tackle a tough off-road course. Rather just the muddy patch at the school's soccer field, with 149mm of ground clearance and a permanent all-wheel drive system with plenty of assist programmes. Oh, and it's expensive too. **LW choice:** Cooper S. **Also look at:** Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Audi Q3, Mercedes-Benz GLA, Fiat 500X, Honda HR-V



PACEMAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cooper S	404 488	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	6.6
Cooper S auto	423 543	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	7.5
John Cooper Works ALL4	501 272	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.0
John Cooper Works ALL4 auto	518 890	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.3

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 75 000 km

Fuel tank: 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 2

» MINI's answer to the Evoque Coupé, the Paceman is the company's first "Sports Activity Coupé". While it's very similar to the Countryman it does have its own character, and with the ALL4 drivetrain offers quite a dynamic drive. Not truly meant for off-road but quite adept at traversing sticky or rutted roads, the Paceman is typically feature-packed and dynamic to drive. **LW choice:** Cooper S. **Also look at:** used Land Rover Range Rover Evoque Coupé, Nissan Juke



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ASX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 GL	304 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLX	339 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLS	352 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLS auto	364 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.4

Service plan: 5 year / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 63 litre

Average sales per month: 106. » The funky ASX is aimed squarely at the lifestyle segment, and for now only front-wheel drive is available. It is loaded with kit, it is safe as houses, it has reasonable performance, and traction control with hill start assist on the GLS models. It's not incapable, but a true soft-roader with great space and user-friendly features. **LW choice:** 2.0 GL. **Also look at:** Jeep Compass, Nissan Juke, Citroen C4 Aircross



TRITON	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Double Cab					
2.5Di-D	359 900	4/2.5TD	100/3500	314/2000	8.3
2.5Di-D Xtreme	379 900	4/2.5TD	100/3500	314/2000	8.3
2.5Di-D 4x4	429 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	400/2000	8.6
2.5Di-D 4x4 Xtreme	449 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	400/2000	8.6

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km for 4x2;

5 years / 90 000 km for 4x4 **Fuel tank:** 75 litres.

Average sales per month: 43 (July) » If one looks past the love-it-or-hate-it styling cues, the Triton is a solid and dependable option in the leisure bakkie market. Pricing remains competitive, and with standard low-range and a rear diff lock, it can keep up with any 4x4 double cab bakkie on the trail. An all-new Triton arrives 2016. **LW choice:** 2.5Di-D 4x4 double cab. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, Nissan Navara, Ford Ranger, Mazda BT-50, Volkswagen Amarok



OUTLANDER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 GLS Exceed	449 900	4/2.4	123/6000	222/4100	8.2

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 9.

» Mitsubishi's Outlander recently received a minor facelift. As with the previous model, a petrol powerplant is your only option. It's not built for serious off-roading, but it can handle the odd ugly dirt road thanks to its 4WD system. Mitsubishi SA has always struggled to sell the Outlander, which is a shame, since it's a solid vehicle that offers good value for money. The new model's design is, well, unique, so some might be put off a bit, but overall, this is a solid compact SUV. **LW Choice:** We'll take it. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, Toyota RAV4, Nissan X-Trail



PAJERO SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5Di-D auto	464 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	350/1800	8.5
2.5Di-D 4x4	499 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	400/2000	7.8
2.5Di-D 4x4 auto	514 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	350/1800	8.5
2.5Di-D 4x4 Shogun auto	514 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	350/1800	8.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 37. » The Triton-based Pajero Sport has just received a new engine. The old 3.2-litre Di-D engine has been replaced with a 2.5-litre diesel mill that develops 131 kW of power and 400 Nm of torque (the auto model only has 350 Nm, for some reason). With loads of space, second- and third-row seating that fold completely flat, and a comfy three-link coil setup at the back, the Pajero Sport offers good value for money in a segment that is dominated by the Fortuner. At the moment, the Sport is available only in 4x4 guise, but a 4x2 model will hit showroom floors before the end of the year. **LW choice:** Di-D 4x4 manual. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner, Chevrolet Trailblazer, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Ford Everest



PAJERO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3-door 3.2Di-D GLS	589 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1
5-door 3.2Di-D GLS	659 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1
5-door 3.2Di-D GLS Exceed	679 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

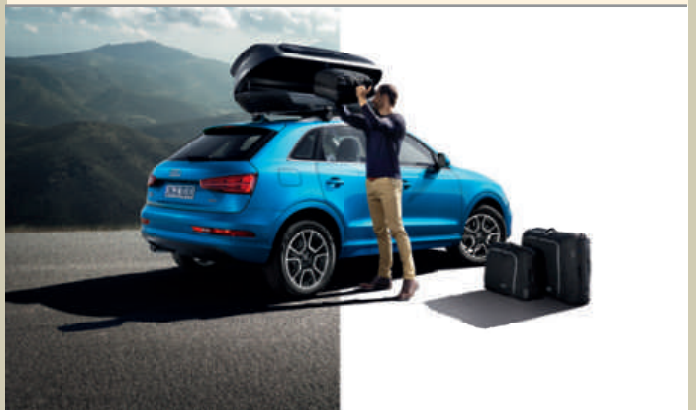
Fuel tank: 69 litres for 3-door; 88 for 5-door

Average sales per month: 42. » The big Mitsubishi is consummately reliable, able and 99.9% of the time up to the task at hand. Nevermind great space, kit and features, the Super Select 4WD-II system allows for 4x4 engagement at speeds of up to 100 km/h. In 4H a viscous coupling unit and centre diff can direct drive to the front wheels if the rear wheels lose traction. The centre diff can be locked for enhanced traction on slippery surfaces (4HLc), and a low-range option (4LLc) is for really tough stuff. Add a lockable diff at the back, and 235mm ground clearance... just watch those flashy side-steps. **LW choice:** 3.2 Di-D GLX 5-door. **Also look at:** Land Rover Discovery, VW Touareg, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado



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JUKE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.2T Acenta	266 400	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	5.6
1.2T Acenta+	282 100	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	5.6
1.5dCi Acenta+	304 400	4/1.5TD	81/4000	260/1750	4.2
1.6T Tekna	330 800	4/1.6T	140/5600	240/1600	6.0
1.6T Tekna Techno	360 200	4/1.6T	140/5600	240/1600	6.0
1.6T 4WD Tekna	370 300	4/1.6T	140/5600	240/1600	6.5



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Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 46 litres. **Average sales per month:** 66.

» On the 'cool' metre the new Juke is about on the same level as the new Range Rover Evoque, yet it sells for less than half the price. The 140 kW version is one of the most surprisingly adept performance cars we've driven for a while. Ground clearance is only 180mm, so while they are a lot of fun on dirt roads, they're not trail vehicles. A 4WD version has recently been added to the line-up. **LW choice:** 1.5dCi Acenta+. **Also look at:** Mazda CX-3, MINI Countryman/Paceman, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Fiat 500X, Honda HR-V



QASHQAI	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.2T Visia	289 900	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	6.2
1.2T Acenta	320 500	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	6.2
1.2T Acenta auto	337 000	4/1.2T	85/5200	165/1750	6.2
1.5dCi Acenta	341 700	4/1.5TD	81/4000	260/1750	4.2
1.6T Acenta	367 900	4/1.6T	120/5600	240/2000	6.2
1.6dCi Acenta auto	395 400	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	4.9
1.6dCi AWD Acenta	396 700	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000km. **Fuel tank:**

65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 214.

» Nissan has replaced its popular Qashqai with an all-new model. Will it sell as well as its predecessor? We think so. The Qashqai still offers great value for money, with solid engine options and loads of practicality. Luggage space could be a little bit better, but overall, the Qashqai is a solid package. The new model also looks sportier and more attractive than the old model, so we're willing to bet Nissan has another winner on its hands. **LW choice:** 1.5 dCi Acenta. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Ford Kuga, VW Tiguan, Toyota RAV4, Mazda CX-5, Peugeot 2008



NP300 HARDBODY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Double Cab					
2.5TDi Hi-rider	341 500	4/2.5TD	98/3600	304/2000	8.8
2.4 Hi-rider	322 400	4/2.4	105/5600	205/3600	11.0
2.4 4x4	389 500	4/2.4	105/5600	205/3600	11.7

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 75 litres. **Average sales per month:**

197 (July). » The older Nissan Hardbody, rebadged the NP300, has been re-employed to cater for the entry-level double cab market, with attractive prices to match. It may be old, but it's far from cold, and still offers a lot of dependable bakkie at an attractive price. The 4x4 version gets low-range and a limited slip rear diff, and tough-as-nails underpinnings. So it can go the off-road mile, its only limiting factor being the L/S rear diff, instead of a locking version. **LW choice:** 2.5TDi. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, GWM Steed



X-TRAIL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 XE	329 900	4/2.0	102/5200	198/4400	8.3
2.5 4x4 SE	367 800	4/2.5	125/6000	226/4400	8.3
1.6dCi XE	354 500	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.1
1.6dCi 4x4 SE	392 200	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3
1.6dCi 4x4 LE	478 300	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3

Maintenance plan: 5 years/90 000km

Fuel tank: 60 litres. **Average sales per month:**

134. » The X-Trail has undergone a very thorough exterior makeover. Gone is the boxy design of the old model, replaced with a sleek and sexy new exterior. That said, though, Nissan hasn't fiddled with its winning formula too much. The new X-Trail offers everything the old one did, but in a shiny and fancier package. A bunch of 4x2 models are available, but you can opt for a 4x4 version if you plan on tackling some gravel roads. Not a real off-roader, but a very practical family leisure vehicle. **LW choice:** 1.6 dCi SE. **Also look at:** Kia Sorento, Hyundai Santa Fe, Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V



NAVARA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
KingCab					
2.5dCi XE	369 300	4/2.5TD	106/4000	356/2000	8.7
2.5dCi 4x4 XE	414 500	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	9.0
Double Cab					
2.5dCi XE	387 100	4/2.5TD	106/4000	356/2000	8.7
2.5dCi 4x4 XE	439 000	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	9.0
2.5dCi LE	457 100	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	8.3
2.5dCi 4x4 LE auto	524 200	4/2.5TD	140/4000	450/2000	9.0
3.0dCi V6 4x4 LE	672 500	V6/3.0TD	170/3750	550/1750	9.3

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 80 litres **Average sales per month:**

94. (July) » It is a big and powerful double-cab bakkie, with a comfortable SUV-like ride,

and spacious cabin. It looks pretty good too.

The 4x4 versions get all the right gizmos, like low range and rear diff lock. If the pilot knows his or her stuff, the Navara can walk the walk with the best of the double cab brigade. **LW choice:** 2.5 dCi 4x4 LE. **Also look at:** Ford Ranger, Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, Mitsubishi Triton



PATROL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0Di GL	605 000	4/3.0TD	118/3600	380/2000	10.8
4.8 GRX	698 000	6/4.8	190/4800	425/3600	17.7

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 135 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1.

» The legendary Patrol is incredibly capable off-road, comfortable as a long-distance cruiser, and features on many wish lists of ardent overlanding enthusiasts. But it's also somewhat impractical to use as daily transport, thanks to its sheer size, and its affection for especially petrol. **LW choice:** 4.8 GRX. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 200, Mitsubishi Pajero



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MOKKA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.4 Turbo Enjoy	292 800	4/1.4T	103/4900	200/1850	6.0
1.4 Turbo Enjoy auto	303 000	4/1.4T	103/4900	200/1850	6.6
1.4 Turbo Cosmo	330 400	4/1.4T	103/4900	200/1850	6.0
1.4 Turbo Cosmo auto	340 500	4/1.4T	103/4900	200/1850	6.6

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000km **Fuel tank:**

53 litres. **Average sales per month:** 130. » The

Opel Mokka is the German manufacturer's first attempt at building a compact SUV and it has done a pretty decent job. The engine is powerful, yet frugal and the cabin is a class above its direct competitors. It's available in front-wheel drive only, which means you're better off staying on the tar. **LW choice:** 1.4T Cosmo. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Mazda CX-3, Peugeot 2008, MINI Countryman, Nissan Juke



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2008	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Active	259 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	5.9
1.6 Allure	287 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	5.9

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 60 litres. **Average sales per month:**

14. » One of the latest compact crossover to hit SA's shores, but it won't be crossing over anything anytime soon. It's available as a FWD only, but it comes with a peppy 1,6-litre naturally aspirated engine and funky styling. **LW choice:** 1.6 Allure. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Mazda CX-3, Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Suzuki SX4, Fiat 500X, Honda HR-V



3008	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Access	299 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	6.7
1.6T Active	349 900	4/1.6T	115/6000	240/1400	6.9
2.0Hdi Allure	428 900	4/2.0TD	120/3750	340/2000	6.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 3

» The versatile Peugeot 3008 was recently given a facelift and this has turned it into one of the most attractive crossovers on the market. It's definitely tuned for on-road performance, which means it's a comfortable daily companion. A wide range of engines is available, so there's something for everyone. **LW choice:** 2.0 Hdi Allure. **Also look at:** Nissan Qashqai, Hyundai ix35, Honda CR-V



PORSCHE Tel. 011 540 5000 Website www.porsche.co.za

MACAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
S diesel	862 000	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	580/1750	6.1
S	873 000	V6/3.0T	250/5500	460/1450	8.7
GTS	TBA	V6/3.0T	265/6000	500/1650	9.2
turbo	1 275 000	V6/3.6T	294/6000	550/1350	8.9

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 60 litres for S diesel; 65 for S / GTS; 75 for turbo. **Average sales per month:** 4.

» The Macan sets a new benchmark in terms of dynamic abilities. It's closer to a sportscar than any SUV has the right to be, but it's comfortable on the daily run. It's smaller than the Cayenne and almost as expensive, but you get more equipment as standard. **LW choice:** S diesel. **Also look at:**







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CAYENNE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cayenne	852 000	V6/3.6	220/6300	400/3000	9.2
diesel	921 000	V6/3.0TD	180/3800	550/1750	6.6
S	986 000	V6/3.6T	309/6000	550/1350	9.5
S diesel	1 151 000	V8/4.1TD	283/3750	850/2000	8.0
S e-hybrid	1 254 000	V6/3.0Se	306e	590e	3.4
GTS	1 176 000	V6/3.6T	324/6000	600/1600	9.8
turbo	1 760 000	V8/4.8T	382/6000	750/2250	11.2
turbo S	2 255 000	V8/4.8T	419/6000	800/2500	11.5

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 100 litres. **Average sales per month:** 32

By now, the Cayenne has more than proven itself as a luxury off-roader. It has power, torque, space, gadgetry, driver aids and off-road aids that most could only dream of. It has air suspension, lockers and good articulation, so it's capable, even if most drivers don't use it to its limits. As a driver's vehicle, the handling, road hold, passenger comfort and ride quality are superb. **LW choice:** S diesel. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Land Rover Range Rover Sport, Mercedes GLE, Infiniti QX70, Volvo XC90



RENAULT Tel. 086 173 6285 Website www.renault.co.za

DUSTER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Expression	215 900	4/1.6	77/5750	148/3750	7.6
1.6 Dynamique	234 900	4/1.6	77/5750	148/3750	7.6
1.5dCi Dynamique	255 900	4/1.5TD	80/3900	240/1750	4.8
1.5dCi Dynamique 4WD	272 900	4/1.5TD	80/3900	240/1750	5.2

Service plan: 3 years / 45 000km **Fuel tank:**

50 litres. **Average sales per month:** 168

Recently facelifted and better than ever. The new car is equipped with leather seats, cruise control and an improved sound system. We have lived with one for eight months now and it is as good off-road as it is on it. In our view, there's no other compact crossover that offers as much as this little tyke. **LW choice:** 1.5 dCi. **Also look at:** Citroën C4 Cactus, Renault Captur



CAPTUR	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
66kW turbo Expression	222 900	3/0.9T	66/5250	135/2500	4.9
66kW turbo Dynamique	242 900	3/0.9T	66/5250	135/2500	4.9
88kW turbo Dynamique auto	283 900	4/1.2T	88/4900	190/2000	5.4

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 45 litres. **Average sales per month:**

357. Arriving the same time as the all-new Citroën Cactus is the Renault Captur. And like the Cactus, the Captur is a funky little crossover built for hip and trendy urbanites. The Captur is available in 2WD only, and unlike the Renault Duster, isn't really designed for the bundu. This is a pretty and well equipped compact crossover built for those who want the space and trendiness of an SUV, but don't need the off-road ability. As with the Cactus, pricing is very competitive. **LW Choice:** Dynamique 88kW Turbo EDC. **Also look at:** Citroën C4 Cactus, Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 2008, Opel Mokka, Fiat 500X, Mazda CX-3, Nissan Juke, Honda HR-V



KOLEOS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5 Dynamique	339 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.6
2.5 4x4 Dynamique	369 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.9
2.5 4x4 Dynamique auto	399 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.6

Service plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 5.

With 206mm of ground clearance and the Nissan X-Trail's All-Mode 4x4 system, the Koleos can go surprisingly far off the beaten track. But, no low range and other locking bits ensure that real off-roading is also not its thing. It much prefers dirt roads to dongas. The diesel model is no longer sold here, but the range still offers good value for buyers looking for something with X-Trail capability and a bit of flair. **LW choice:** 2.5 Dynamique. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail



SSANGYONG Tel. 012 661 3161 Website www.mahindra.co.za

KORANDO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0	324 995	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4000	7.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 57 litres.

Average sales per month: 1

The new Korando is a modern crossover, featuring a monocoque design, and an independent suspension set-up. The latest Korando, boasting minor upgrades, looks amazingly normal, and



it is now distributed here by Mahindra SA. Although it is cheaper in some instances, the service plan has also shrunk. It has 180mm ground clearance, and in the AWD model the system normally sends all the power to the front wheels but as soon as wheelslip is detected the rear wheels also get a piece of the action. The driver can also lock the system in a 50/50 split at speeds slower than 40km/h. **LW choice:** Only 1 model. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Hyundai ix35, Toyota RAV4

ACTYON SPORTS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.3 4x4 high	289 995	4/2.3	110/5500	214/3500	12.4
2.0D high	309 995	4/2.0TD	114/4000	360/1500	7.4
2.0D 4x4 Deluxe	359 995	4/2.0TD	114/4000	360/1500	7.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

75 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1.

With upgraded looks and new engine options, the Actyon Sports is a highly competitive and capable double cab bakkie, although its load carrying capacity puts it below the rest. It's comfortable, has a good stability program and can be very dynamic off-road. It's not mean for trail driving, however, and can tackle medium grade courses with its low-range gearing. It's also great in sand and mud. **LW choice:** 2.0D high. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, GWM Steed, Mahindra Scorpio



REXTON W	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
RX270XDi	394 995	5/2.7TD	121/4000	340/1800	8.6
RX270XDi Deluxe	449 995	5/2.7TD	121/4000	340/1800	9.0

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 78 litres

Average sales per month: n/a.

Ssangyong has updated their large SUV, a seven-seater with a part-time 4x4 drivetrain and plenty of modern features like Bluetooth and cruise control. Drive can be locked in four-high or low-range gearing, making it a well equipped, affordable option. It's undoubtedly better looking, but the previous Rexton's sales figures won't be hard to beat, and Ssangyong has a long way to go to convince buyers to get behind the wheel. The update does, however, see considerable improvement to the interior. **LW choice:** RX270XDi. **Also look at:** GWM H5 4x4, Mahindra XUV500



SUBARU Tel. 011 608 0116 Website www.subaru.co.za

XV	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0i	323 000	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	8.0
2.0i auto	341 500	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	7.9
2.0i-S	378 000	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	7.9

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 75 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 25. The funky XV, which is based on the Impreza hatch, is really cool piece of four-wheel driven kit. With the new models, it's highly competitive, and surprisingly



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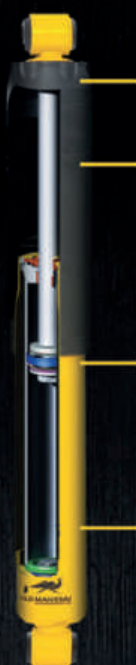
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capable off-road for a soft-roader. It's not as dynamic a drive as you might expect from Subaru, but its a unique offering in a very competitive segment, with 220mm ground clearance and Subaru's highly capable all-wheel drive system. **LW choice:** 2.0i. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi ASX, Mercedes-Benz GLA



FORESTER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 X	353 000	b4/2.0	110/6200	198/4200	7.2
2.5 X	393 000	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.5 XS	427 500	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.5 XS Premium	472 000	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.0 XT	543 000	b4/2.0T	177/5600	350/2400	8.5

Maintenance plan: 3 years / 75 000 km **Fuel tank:** 65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 26 >> The good-looking Forester has just been refreshed and it's a dream to drive. The Forester has already won the hearts of many loyal fans, and with good reason. It's got great quality, practicality and the turbocharged XT is SUV performance heaven. It handles well both on and off-road, and the new X-Mode gives it a slight edge in the rough over the previous model. They've also spent a lot on developing a more fuel efficient Forester, which is bound to pay off in the sales department. **LW choice:** 2.5 XS. **Also look at:** Suzuki Grand Vitara, Nissan X-Trail



OUTBACK	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5i-S Premium	494 000	b4/2.5	129/5800	235/4000	7.3
2.0D Premium	544 000	b4/2.0TD	110/3600	350/1600	6.3
3.6 R-S Premium	544 000	b6/3.6	191/6000	350/4400	9.9

Service plan: 3 year / 75 000km. **Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 13. >> The new Outback continues to build on the reputation of the models that came before it. It's still practical, safe, luxurious and very well built. The new model's styling is a massive leap forward, but Subaru has played it safe in the engines department by carrying over all of the powertrains used in the previous model. **LW choice:** 2.0-litre turbodiesel CVT. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Volvo V60 Cross Country / XC70



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JIMNY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.3	229 900	4/1.3	63/6000	110/4100	7.2
1.3 auto	245 900	4/1.3	63/6000	110/4100	7.6

Service plan: 4 years / 60 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 40 litres. **Average sales per month:** 44. >> The Suzuki Jimny has a low-range transfer case, low weight, and a relatively powerful new 1.3-litre engine. Okay, so the Jimny is small, and it doesn't really enjoy long-distance trips. But, thanks to its size it makes light work of just about any 4x4 track. It is an economical runabout. It's luxurious and safe. Quality is good. We like it. A lot. Ground clearance is pegged at only 190mm, but thanks to the excellent approach and departure angles, small and nimble size, and tight turning circle, this won't affect the Jimny as much as it would a bigger vehicle. It can make a pukka 4x4 costing four times as much look rather silly on a tight 4x4 track. The only thing that may stop it is an axle twister – the Jimny does not have a rear diff lock or limited slip diff. **LW choice:** The Jimny, please! **Also look at:** Daihatsu Terios Off-road



VITARA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 GL	239 900	4/1.6	86/6000	151/4000	5.8
1.6 GL+	269 900	4/1.6	86/6000	151/4000	5.8
1.6 GL+ AllGrip	291 900	4/1.6	86/6000	151/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX auto	299 900	4/1.6	86/6000	151/4000	6.0
1.6 GLX AllGrip	319 900	4/1.6	86/6000	151/4000	6.2

Service plan: 4 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 12. >> The new Suzuki Vitara is nothing like the Vitara of old. More soft-roader than off-roader, but it will go a lot further than expected. Pricing is keen and standard equipment is more than generous. Get a front-wheel drive if you only drive the occasional gravel road. **LW choice:** GL+. **Also look at:** Fiat 500X, Ford EcoSport, Honda HR-V, Jeep Renegade, Mazda CX-3, Nissan Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Renault Captur,



SX4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 GL	269 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX	300 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX auto	323 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX AllGrip	324 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	6.2
1.6 GLX AllGrip auto	346 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	6.2

Service plan: 3 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 26 >> The all-new Suzuki SX4 has landed, and it is quite a different vehicle to the outgoing model. It is sleeker, more refined, and quite a bit bigger. Overall, this is an impressive compact SUV that is well priced. It has loads of infotainment features, and even boasts top-notch safety features such as seven airbags. It is available with a CVT gearbox, but the manual is the one to go for. You probably won't be needing that 4WD system either, so the basic 4x2 model with the manual shifter should be your pick. Great value for money! **LW choice:** GLX manual. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Mazda CX-3, Mitsubishi ASX, Nissan Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008, Fiat 500X, Honda HR-V



GRAND VITARA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 Dune	333 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	8.9
2.4 Dune auto	348 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	9.9
2.4 Summit	403 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	8.9
2.4 Summit auto	419 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	9.9

Service plan: 6 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 66 litres. **Average sales per month:** 5. >> If compact SUVs were soccer players, the Grand Vitara would be English legend David Beckham. Just like Beckham, the Vitara is not only a trendy looker, but also surprisingly capable in its application. The Suzuki's permanent 4x4 system transfers the engine's urge to both front and rear wheels via a torque-sensitive, limited-slip centre differential. The system offers three driving modes: 4H, 4H-Lock, and 4L-Lock. Add 206mm ground clearance, good wheel travel, tough 4x4 underpinnings and a mighty impressive traction control system, and the Grand Vitara can go places where few small SUVs will dare. **LW choice:** 2.4 Summit. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail, Toyota RAV4



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XENON	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Double Cab					
3.0L DLE	199 995	4/3.0TD	85/3000	300/1800	10.0
XT 2.2L	259 995	4/2.2TD	110/4000	320/1500	9.0
XT 2.2L 4x4	294 995	4/2.2TD	110/4000	320/1500	9.0

Service plan: 5 years / 75 000 km for XT. **Fuel tank:** 65 litres for 3.0L; 70 for XT. **Average sales per month:** 16. >> What a difference the new, more modern 2.2-litre engine has made to the Xenon. The latest Xenon, now with about 300 improvements over the original model, is not perfect, but it can go the off-road mile, it can gobble up open-road



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BUYER'S GUIDE: SUVs, MPVs & Double Cabs

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kilometres, and it can handle the city slog too. It just does it in a less refined manner than say, a Hilux. But considering that it sells for half the price of a new Hilux... who needs refinement, anyway? **LW choice:** 2.2 4x4. **Also look at:** GWM Steed, Mahindra Scorpio Pik-Up, a used double-cab

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HILUX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Xtra Cab					
2.5D-4D SRX	315 500	4/2.5TD	75/3600	260/1600	n/a
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45	395 000	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45	454 500	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a
Double Cab					
2.7 Raider Legend 45	399 100	4/2.7	118/5200	241/3800	10.8
2.5D-4D 4x4 SRX	421 300	4/2.5TD	75/3600	260/1600	8.7
2.5D-4D Raider Legend 45	434 900	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	8.0
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45	462 900	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45 auto	477 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45	523 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45 auto	537 800	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
4.0 V6 Raider Legend 45	476 400	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0
4.0 V6 4x4 Raider Legend 45	563 900	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000km. **Fuel tank:** 80 litres.

Average sales per month: 1 001 (July). >> The Hilux, now available in both Dakar and Legend45 guise, continues to be a big seller. Although the engines remain the same, the top double cab models now vitally get vehicle dynamic control (VDC) and traction control, to counter the VW Amarok and Ford Ranger. Whether it will keep on to sales remains to be seen, but the 4x4 versions have rear diff locks and low-range gearing, making it even more capable than before. **LW choice:** 3.0 D-4D double cab 4x4 Raider. **Also look at:** Volkswagen Amarok, Nissan Navara, Ford Ranger, Isuzu KB



RAV4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 GX	317 800	4/2.0	107/6200	187/3600	7.7
2.0 GX auto	328 800	4/2.0	107/6200	187/3600	7.4
2.2D-4D AWD GX	399 200	4/2.2TD	110/3600	340/2000	5.6
2.2D-4D AWD VX	480 800	4/2.2TD	110/3600	340/2000	6.5
2.5 AWD VX	450 700	4/2.5	132/6000	233/4100	8.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km.

Fuel tank: 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 506. >> The RAV4 has grown up a lot since it was first launched in 1994, giving birth to the entire compact SUV market. Now it's been restyled with a much anticipated update, and a wider price range that should open it open to a new range of buyers. **LW choice:** 2.2D-4D AWD GX. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail



FORTUNER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5D-4D	399 500	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	8.0
2.5D-4D auto	413 300	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	9.1
3.0D-4D	480 000	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.5
3.0D-4D auto	493 600	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.4
3.0D-4D Limited	480 000	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.5
3.0D-4D Limited auto	493 600	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.4
3.0D-4D 4x4	534 400	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 auto	548 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.8
3.0D-4D 4x4 Limited	534 400	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 Limited auto	548 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.8
4.0 V6	513 000	V6/4	175/5200	376/3800	12.7
4.0 V6 4x4	567 200	V6/4	175/5200	376/3800	13.0

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:**

80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 746. >> SA's best-selling SUV has received an epic makeover, and more recently a spec upgrade - with black interiors! The best news for Joe Soap is the introduction of an entry-level 2.5D-4D 4x2 model. They may look new, but under the skin the Fortuner 4x4 models are still a rough and ready 4x4s. Thanks to its rugged Hilux underpinnings, it is near unstoppable in most conditions. Even the 4x2 models with standard rear diff lock will get farther on a tough off-road route than some other 4x4 vehicles. **LW choice:** 2.5D-4D 4x2. **Also look at:** Chevrolet Trailblazer, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport



LAND CRUISER 70 SERIES	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
79 4.0 V6 double cab	548 900	V6/4.0	170/5200	360/3800	13.6
79 4.2D double cab	575 700	6/4.2D	96/3800	285/2200	13.0

79 4.5D-4D LX V8 double cab	646 500	V8/4.5TD	151/3400	430/1200	11.6
76 4.5D-4D LX V8 station wagon	661 100	V8/4.5TD	151/3400	430/1200	11.6

Service plan: 5 years/90 000km **Fuel tank:** 93 litres.

Average sales per month: n/a. >> The recent upgrades have made the Land Cruiser even better than it was. It's safer, more advanced on the inside and much easier to drive. Very capable off-road and not that expensive considering the price of other large SUVs out there. **LW choice:** V8 petrol. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Range Rover, Mercedes GL.



FJ CRUISER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
FJ Cruiser	526 800	V6/4.0	200/5600	380/4400	11.4
FJ Sport Cruiser	552 900	V6/4.0	200/5600	380/4400	11.4

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km

Fuel tank: 72+87 (159) litres **Average sales per**

month: 8. >> The retro-styled Cruiser not only looks good but also has real-world 4x4 ability, punchy performance from the 200kW V6 engine and a decently refined on-road ride too. With 245mm ground clearance, a pukka transfer case, ATRAC traction control, a rear differential lock, 700mm wading depth, excellent approach and departure angles and a 200 kW V6 engine, the FJ is amazingly capable off-road. **LW choice:** FJ Cruiser by Rob Green Motorsport. **Also look at:** Jeep Wrangler, Land Rover Defender 90



LAND CRUISER PRADO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0DT TX	700 600	4/3.0TD	120/3400	400/1600	8.5
4.0 VX	797 900	V6/4	202/5600	381/4400	11.5
3.0DT VX	800 200	4/3.0TD	120/3400	400/1600	8.5

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 87+63

(150) litres. **Average sales per month:** 136. >> It's comfortable, luxurious, should be reliable (it's a Toyota), and has all the 4x4 technology anyone could ask for. The powerful diesel engine finally fixes a Prado weakness, but it is still outgunned by its rivals. Like anything with a Land Cruiser badge, the Prado is a real 4x4. Permanent four-wheel drive, low-range, centre and rear diff locks, traction control, Hill Start Assist, Crawl Control and Multi-terrain. **LW choice:** 4.0 V6 TX. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi Pajero, Nissan Patrol, Land Rover Discovery, VW Touareg, Volvo XC90



LAND CRUISER 200	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
4.5D-4D V8 GX	850 000	V8/4.5TD	173/3200	615/1800	10.3
4.5D-4D V8 VX	1 141 700	V8/4.5TD	173/3200	615/1800	10.3

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km. **Fuel tank:**

93+45 (138) litres. **Average sales per month:** 31

>> The big daddy of Toyota's Cruiser family has grown from a highly capable 4x4 into a premium luxury 4x4, and just received a features upgrade. It's still highly capable, but the big Cruiser now has a host of fancy electronics and gizmos. It is engineered to withstand the harshest of 4x4 conditions, despite being a five-star luxury vehicle. It is indeed capable of doing the hard yards. It has low range, a lockable centre diff and crawl mode for low-speed driving. But even with all the gadgets, it has lost some of its "let's head out into the bush" attraction. **LW choice:** 4.5D-4D VX. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Land Rover Range Rover, Mercedes-Benz GL



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CADDY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Alltrack 2.0TDI	358 200	4/2.0TD	81/4200	280/1750	5.7
Alltrack 2.0TDI auto	387 300	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.2

Service plan: 3 years / 60 000 km. **Fuel tank:** 55 litres.

Average sales per month: New. >> The Caddy Alltrack is a proper dual purpose vehicle. You can use it during the week to ferry the kids to school and over the weekends you can take them to their favourite holiday sport. A proper all-wheel drive drivetrain means it feel quite composed on a gravel road, but that's as far as it will ever go. **LW choice:** Alltrack diesel. **Also look at:** Only one car like it.



TIGUAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.4TSI 90kW Trend&Fun	340 900	4/1.4T	90/5000	200/1500	6.5
1.4TSI 118kW Trend&Fun	377 900	4/1.4ST	118/5800	240/1750	6.7
1.4TSI 118kW Trend&Fun auto	393 900	4/1.4ST	118/5800	240/1750	7.1
2.0TDI Trend&Fun	369 000	4/2.0TD	81/2750	280/1750	5.3
2.0TDI 4Motion Trend&Fun	436 400	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TDI 4Motion Track&Field	462 200	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TDI 4Motion Sport&Style	476 500	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TSI 4Motion Sport&Style	499 200	4/2.0T	155/5100	280/1700	8.8

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Maintenance plan: 5 years / 60 000 km

Fuel tank: 64 litres. **Average sales per month:** 140.

» The baby Touareg competes in the compact SUV segment, which has recently become very competitive. There's still a model for just about every need, and the Blue Motion models offer outstanding fuel consumption. The Tiguan is still a great all-rounder. With no low range, and a ground clearance of 200mm, the Tiguan is still a soft-roader. The Track&Field versions, which come with underbody protection, are the more rugged models with improved clearance, approach and departure angles. **LW choice:** 1.4TSI 4Motion Trend&Fun. **Also look at:** Toyota RAV4, Subaru Forester, Nissan Qashqai



AMAROK	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0TDI Trendline	437 400	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1600	7.6
2.0TDI Trendline 4Motion	488 400	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1600	7.7
2.0BITDI Highline	466 100	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	7.9
2.0BITDI Highline auto	483 600	4/2.0TD	132/4000	420/1750	8.2
2.0BITDI Highline 4Motion	517 100	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.0
2.0BITDI Highline 4Motion auto	534 600	4/2.0TD	132/4000	420/1750	8.3

Service plan: 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:**

80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 154 (July).

» The big German bakkie has been upsetting the Ford and Toyota fans by winning awards left right and centre, and its SUV-like cabin aim it squarely at the leisure market. It comes with ESP, Hill Start/hill descent, off-road ABS, traction control, electronic differential lock, a mechanical locking differential, and even a low-range transfer case. The Amarok can go the off-road mile, despite its size, and its towing capabilities have outshone the rest. The automatic Highline controversially has an eight-speed 'box with what is essentially a crawl gear, and no low-range 'box. **LW choice:** 2.0BITDI 4Motion. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, Ford Ranger, Isuzu KB.



KOMBI / CARAVELLE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Kombi					
2.0TDI SWB Trendline	481 800	4/2.0TD	75/3000	250/1500	7.3
2.0TDI SWB Trendline auto	513 300	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1750	8.0
2.0TDI SWB Comfortline	566 400	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1750	7.5
2.0TDI SWB Comfortline auto	583 900	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1750	8.0
2.0TDI LWB Comfortline auto	591 900	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1750	8.0
Caravelle					
2.0BITDI Comfortline auto	738 300	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	7.9
2.0BITDI Comfortline 4Motion auto	770 800	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.8
2.0BITDI Highline auto	816 300	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	7.9
2.0BITDI Highline 4Motion auto	848 800	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 90 000 km.

Fuel tank: 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** New. »

The all-new Caravelle is not a massive step up from the previous generation in terms of style, but underneath it's a different story. The 2.0-litre engine is powerful and the driving experience is now more refined than ever before. It will likely remain the SA favourite it always has been. **LW Choice:** 4Motion auto. **Also look at:** Ford Tourneo Custom, Hyundai H-1, Chrysler Grand Voyager, Mercedes-Benz Vito/V-Class, Kia Grand Sedona



TOUAREG	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
V6 Elegance	734 900	V6/3.6	206/6200	360/3200	10.9
V6 TDI Luxury	822 500	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	550/2000	7.2
V6 TDI Escape	847 800	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	550/2000	7.3
V8 TDI Executive	1 020 000	V8/4.1TD	250/4000	800/1750	9.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 100 litres. **Average sales per month:**

25. » Filling the top-dog position in the line-up is a 250kW/800Nm 4.2-litre V8 TDI. A new eight-speed auto gearbox is standard across the range. The Touareg gets permanent 4x4 with a limited-slip Torsen centre diff and electronic diff locks (EDS) on all four wheels, but no low-range gearing. The V6 TDI model is available in Escape guise, which adds low-range gearing, increased ground clearance, a locking centre diff and an optional rear diff. **LW choice:** V6 TDI. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, BMW X5, Infiniti QX70, Land Rover Discovery / Range Rover Sport, Lexus RX, Mercedes-Benz GLE, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, Volvo XC90



VOLVO Phone: 012 450 4901 **Website:** www.volvocars.com/za

V40 CROSS COUNTRY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
T4 Momentum	386 700	4/2.0T	140/4700	300/1300	5.5
T4 Momentum auto	405 600	4/2.0T	140/4700	300/1300	5.6
D3 Momentum	423 400	4/2.0TD	110/3750	320/1750	4.0
D4 Momentum	439 100	4/2.0TD	140/4250	400/1750	4.3
T5 AWD Momentum	474 800	4/2.0T	180/5500	350/1500	6.4

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 57 litres. **Average sales per month:**

15. » The low-slung V40 Cross Country is an interesting alternative to all those crossovers out there at the moment. It's obviously not a hardcore 4x4, but there is the option of AWD in the top-end T5 model, so the V40 can deal with a bad dirt road. Moreover, the V40 Cross Country looks good, is comfy and offers tons of packing space. Pricing is very competitive, and you even get a five-year maintenance plan as well. If you want a 4x4 that can tackle trails, this isn't the vehicle for you, but if you want a fun and practical ever-day car, the V40 is worth a look. **LW choice:** D4. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Mercedes-Benz GLA, MINI Countryman, Subaru XV



V60 CROSS COUNTRY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D4 AWD Momentum	499 900	5/2.4TD	140/4000	420/1500	5.7
T5 AWD Momentum	533 500	5/2.5T	187/5400	360/1800	8.5

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 68 litres. **Average sales per month:**

6. » Like its smaller sibling, the V40 Cross Country, the V60 Cross Country offers an alternative to modern crossovers and compact SUVs. It still has AWD and a decent amount of ground clearance, but isn't designed for hardcore off-road duty. The V60 is more spacious than the V40 – offering a very impressive amount of luggage space – and boasts some truly wonderful styling. If you want an estate, but also want AWD and loads of space, the V60 Cross Country is worth looking at. It will undoubtedly make you stand out from the crowd. **LW Choice:** D4 AWD. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Subaru Outback



XC70	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D5 AWD Inscription	505 000	5/2.4TD	162/4000	440/1500	5.8

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

9. » The Volvo XC70 is more a station wagon on stilts than it is an SUV, but it's more capable than one might think. The interior is commodious and the diesel engine is powerful and frugal in equal measure. **LW choice:** Only one model in the line-up. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Subaru Outback



XC60	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
T5 Momentum	566 800	4/2.0T	180/5500	350/1500	6.7
D4 Momentum	571 500	4/2.0TD	140/4250	400/1750	4.7
D5 AWD Momentum	633 700	5/2.4TD	162/4000	440/1500	5.7
T6 Momentum	641 300	4/2.0ST	225/5700	400/2100	7.0

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

46. » Touted as the safest car in the world (and it probably is), the XC60 has moved the SUV goalposts for the Swedish brand. It's more modern and good-looking, yet still features all the qualities Volvo is renowned for. With a 230mm ground clearance, the XC60 is actually a competent off-roader, and you might find yourself heading towards a more challenging 4x4 track after the Swede dispatches of the soft-roader route without working hard at all. It has no low range, but Volvo's Instant Traction system sorts the traction details out. Hill descent control is also standard. **LW choice:** T6. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, BMW X3, Audi Q5, Mercedes GLC, Lexus NX, Land Rover Discovery Sport.



XC90	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D4 Momentum	804 000	4/2.0TD	140/4250	400/1750	5.2
D5 AWD Momentum	853 200	4/2.0TD	165/4250	470/1750	5.8
T5 AWD Momentum	827 400	4/2.0T	187/5500	350/1500	7.6
T6 AWD Momentum	867 000	4/2.0ST	235/5700	400/2200	8.0
T8 Twin Engine AWD Momentum	1 005 100	4/2.0STe	300e	640e	2.1

Maintenance plan: 5 years / 100 000 km

Fuel tank: 71 litres for D4 to T6; 50 for T8.

Average sales per month: 42. » The XC90 is available only with four-cylinder engines, which is a first in this segment. It is, however, not down on power compared to its rivals and it will likely set new standards in fuel consumption and passenger safety in this segment. We haven't driven it yet, but it will likely be the new luxury SUV benchmark. **LW choice:** D5 AWD. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, BMW X5, Infiniti QX70, Land Rover Discovery / Range Rover Sport, Lexus RX, Mercedes GLE, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, Porsche Cayenne, Volkswagen Touareg





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 CC Coils front Coils rear the kit has 1x set front coils 1x set rear coils, 2x front shocks and 2 x rear shocks.
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